Mapping the
Jihadist Threat:

The War on Terror Since 9/11

A REPORT OF THE ASPEN STRATEGY GROUP

Kurt M. Campbell, Editor
Willow Darsie, Editor

Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and Brent Scowcroft, Co–Chairmen

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THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

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GENERAL BRENT SCOWCROFT AWARD FELLOWS

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Medora Brown, National Cathedral School

Howard Yuan, Peking University

AGENDA

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- Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Dean, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
- Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft (USAF, ret.), President, The Scowcroft Group, former Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

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- Kurt M. Campbell, Senior Vice President, Center for Strategic and International Studies and Director, Aspen Strategy Group, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asia and the Pacific

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• Mitchell Reiss, Vice Provost, Reeves Center for International Studies, College of William and Mary, and Special Envoy for Northern Ireland, former Director of Policy Planning, State Department, and former Dean of International Affairs and Director of Reeves Center for International Studies, William and Mary

• Anne-Marie Slaughter, Dean, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, former J. Sinclair Armstrong Professor of International, Foreign, and Comparative Law and Director of the International Legal Studies Program, Harvard Law School

Workshop Scene Setter and Discussion Guide

ASPEN STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP
"MAPPING THE JIHADIST THREAT: THE WAR ON TERROR SINCE 9/11"

SCENE SETTER AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

KURT M. CAMPBELL
DIRECTOR, ASPEN STRATEGY GROUP
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, HENRY A. KISSINGER CHAIR, AND
DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM,
CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld famously bemoaned the challenges of measuring success in a long twilight struggle with Islamic fundamentalists. There are the "known unknowns" and "unknown unknowns" that confront the United States in the most unfamiliar set of foreign policy challenges in the country's history. In addition to the difficulties of establishing "metrics" – as Rumsfeld would put it – in our war on terror, there is also the intrinsically related and perhaps more vexing question of how the global ideological virus of Islamic fundamentalism is morphing and evolving. An influential and well funded cohort of radicalized Islamists, seizing upon an unyielding interpretation of religious text (a kind of Koranic original intent), has been at war with the West for nearly a generation, and the pace of operations globally is accelerating. According to recently released U.S. government reports, there has been a sharp surge in the number of global terrorist attacks in recent years, a tally substantially comprised of incidents initiated by Islamist instigators. Taken in its totality with all its many manifestations, the jihadist challenge stretches from the Taliban strongholds in the rugged Afghan mountains and the dense jungle hideouts of the Philippines, to the ornate mosques of Saudi Arabia, from a quiet neighborhood in Leeds, England to, just possibly, a place near you.

The Aspen Strategy Group (ASG) will devote its summer retreat to a thorough exploration of how the United States is faring in its global war on terror since the twin tragedies of 9/11. While the United States is engaged in a host of vital foreign policy challenges – trying to stabilize Iraq even with all the attendant setbacks and miscalculations, dealing with the rise of China to great power status in Asia, refashioning frayed ties with transatlantic partners, seeking to block further nuclear proliferation in North Korea and Iran – it is the threat posed by jihadist fundamentalists that will quite possibly confront American commentators, strategists, and policymakers for generations. Indeed, even in the absence of daily reminders, there are global manifestations of an

entrenched and evolving set of challenges facing the United States and its allies. But just how is this threat likely to be realized and do we have a sufficient understanding of the religiously inspired, globally diversified adversary that confronts us?

The sessions in Aspen will be designed to explore the global nature of the jihadist threat, mapping the ideological course and political path of the radical Islamists committed to a holy war against the West and its institutions, both religious and secular. Towards this goal, we propose several levels of exploration over the course of five days. We seek to understand first the nature of the groups arrayed against us before asking the very different question of how we are faring in this long, twilight struggle. We will examine the terrorist tools used by the jihadists and the nature of recruitment used by them to attract adherents to the cause. We have brought to Aspen a distinguished group of experts, practitioners, and commentators, from diverse perspectives and different professional stages of life, to tackle the big questions associated with the jihadists. How is their peculiar brand of ideology evolving over time? Are their numbers increasing? Or, as Secretary Rumsfeld queried in a famously leaked memorandum, "Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training, and deploying against us?" Moreover, how does the majority of the Islamic world view the actions of a radicalized few in the jihadist movement? Have their capabilities to inflict mass casualties improved? And, how are we doing in an overarching sense in the struggle against the jihadists?

While it is on one level very commendable that the United States and the Bush administration have labored mightily to avoid a characterization of this conflict that suggests that one civilization has declared war on another, there are widely acknowledged limitations with the "war on terror" moniker we have chosen to identify our protracted campaign. Indeed, every word in the organizing mantra has its flaws: "war" has its metaphorical uses to be sure, but its appropriation in this case perhaps reveals an over reliance on the martial aspects of the campaign; "on" suggests that the enemy can be neatly disaggregated and defined, completely apart from "our" side in the conflict; and "terror" is simply a tactic in a struggle, not an actual body of followers or combatants. One of the consequences of this purposeful vagueness is that there is a lack of clarity and understanding about the nature of the threat that confronts us as nation.

The other problem with the uses of war terminology in the struggle with al Qaeda and the Islamists is what it conjures on the domestic front. The American way of war has historically involved generous portions of service and sacrifice, and there are indeed enormous sacrifices being made today on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet these sacrifices are being disproportionately born by a relatively small percentage of armed men and women, while a majority of Americans are detached from the conflict and watch it anxiously from the sidelines. It is as if having a yellow ribbon reading "support our troops" prominently displayed on a car bumper is sufficient. While our soldiers and Marines are demonstrating enormous resourcefulness and resolve in their operational duties, the strains on our military institutions are growing daily, to the point that some are beginning to question the long-term viability of the all volunteer force. A critical matter for the ASG to take up this summer is whether a rebalancing of commitments and resources will ultimately be necessary for the nation to effectively meet our military obligations in the contest with the jihadists.

The era of jihadism has brought with it an obscure vocabulary and set of skills suddenly into vogue. Strategists and commentators formerly more familiar with issues of security alliances and nuclear

options now speak knowingly of *fatwas, Salafism, Wahhabism, al Qaeda,* and *madrassas.* The history of counterinsurgencies from Malaysia to Vietnam and El Salvador are combed for nuggets of insight that could conceivable be applicable to waging a new kind of global counterinsurgency. Suicide bombings have emerged as the jihadist weapon of choice and the Islamic fundamentalists have also demonstrated remarkable innovation in the recruiting, training, transportation of foot soldiers and in the staging of operations. Indeed, even as the U.S. armed forces are working mightily to reach recruiting goals, particularly for the Army and Marine Corps, jihadist groups and terrorist cells apparently have had little difficulty in attracting adherents, even when it means a one way ticket on a suicide mission.

The internet, historically regarded as the indispensable tool and facilitator of globalization, has been very effectively used by its violent detractors in the jihadist camp to spread hate-filled messages and operational insights.

> **The United States is arguably entering the *post* post 9/11 era in American foreign policy – a period marked by gnawing uncertainty over what's next in the global campaign but generally lacking in the urgency and fear associated with the first phase of the conflict.**

The United States is arguably entering the *post* post 9/11 era in American foreign policy — a period marked by gnawing uncertainty over what's next in the global campaign but generally lacking in the urgency and fear associated with the first phase of the conflict. Even though the recent terror bombings in London reminded Americans of the latent threat, the very British determination to get on with normal life on the day after (a purposeful post-blast strategy with clear historical echoes of British stoicism after the London blitz) allowed many Americans to return to their low level, latent anxieties. Osama bin Laden, the architect of airliners plowing into tall buildings, is today the tallest man in hiding in the unruly tribal areas of Pakistan's South Waziristan and has largely slipped from our national consciousness in the last four years. China's rise, with its relatively uncomplicated "metrics" of trade percentages, diplomatic gambits, missile production, and energy consumption, is once again attracting strategic curiosity in Washington and drawing attention away from the GWOT (a truly unfortunate acronym), at least partly because the struggle with the jihadists has lost some sense of urgency.

Already there are clear distinctions between the two epochs — post 9/11 and *post* post 9/11 — manifested at both the political and personal level. For New Yorkers and Washingtonians, it is once again possible to hear a loud siren or see an urgent news flash without the inevitable moment of Chekhovian pause animated by the unspoken cry, "please not again." The Department of Homeland Security, launched with such promise as the ultimate guarantor of domestic safety in the face of the terrorist schemes, increasingly resembles a bureaucratic backwater struggling for budget dollars, mission coherence, and political respect.

The color-coding schemes of "red" and "orange" look less like signposts of domestic vigilance and more — to some — like either politically motivated exercises around election campaigns or fodder for late night comedians. Airport search rituals are increasingly seen less as necessary inconveniences — the price we pay for safe skies — and more as personal indignities with no apparent logic. And after a period in which 9/11 was the focusing lens for the conduct of American foreign policy, that clarity of purpose (which some would describe even at the time as an overly simplistic, monocular mindset) has

been replaced by a strategic agenda again marked by competing demands and conflicting interests. In this foreign policy cacophony, the war on terror has lost some of its focus and urgency.

There are also important changes in how we conceptualize the very essence of the campaign against the jihadists. For the longest time, it was possible politically to offer only the most basic set of observations when it came to waging this struggle: we must kill them before they kill us. This lack of initial nuance is completely understandable given the psychological shocks of 9/11, and the political competition over who could most effectively undertake the campaign against the terrorists essentially degenerated into an "I will kill them deader" kind of banter during the last Presidential contest. While the essential insight behind the KTF (kill them first) principal remains essentially sound, there is now much greater discussion of how to prosecute this campaign beyond the military dimension. Indeed, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick recently commented during his trip to Amman, Jordan that, "military means alone are not capable of defeating radical fundamentalists." To be sure, there is renewed attention to efforts designed to "drain the swamps" of the Middle East filled with disaffected young Islamic men, through greater educational opportunities, economic investment, and domestic democratic possibilities, but these efforts have not gone nearly far or fast enough. There is also the beginning of quiet efforts to consider whether jihadists (or their supporting communities) can ever be deterred, contained, or even negotiated with in certain circumstances. Simply put, can a kind of coexistence ever be achieved? And how best might we help settle the civilizational struggle within Islam in ways favorable to the moderate and progressive? These potential strategies – attended by the inevitable requirements of continued vigorous applications of the military, law enforcement, and intelligence components of the contest – will be thoroughly vetted in Aspen.

Iraq, however, has complicated our understanding of the global challenge against the jihadists in troubling ways. What passes as American strategy for the war these days can sound suspiciously like rote incantations, such as: "We're fighting the enemy in Iraq and Afghanistan and across the world so we do not have to face them here at home." Indeed, some have argued that the reverse is true: by our actions, the United States is actually creating more terrorists in and around Iraq that one day may threaten the American homeland. It is no longer possible to answer or even usefully articulate the major questions surrounding the Iraq operation, so poisonous are the politics of the campaign. Why did we go into Iraq in the first place? And are we winning against an insurgency that, nearly three years on, we still have difficulty identifying and understanding? How long will this dangerous and unforgiving campaign have to last before American soldiers, sailors, and Marines can begin to come home? Will public support for the military campaign in Iraq hold?

> **Indeed, our very military presence in Iraq may be creating common cause between secular nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists.**

There continues to be profound disagreement over the existence of key organic links between Saddam's former regime and Islamic terrorist organizations before the U.S. led invasion, but there is now a general, if grudging, recognition that Iraq since the American intervention has become a global magnet for jihadists, with the number of suicide bombings there by some estimates now reaching into the thousands. There is profound worry that the crucible of conflict in Iraq is forging an operational alliance between various groups, both inside the country and in the surrounding region, that were formerly opposed to one another. Indeed, our very military presence in Iraq may be creating common cause between secular nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists. The political challenges posed by the American occupation in

Iraq has led to some of the most painful occasions of partisan positioning and historical revisionism in recent memory ("I supported the $87 billion actually before I voted against it" and "I'm not sure I recall ever supporting or even meeting a Mr. Chalabi, who is he again?"). A full and frank discussion of the war in Iraq, not simply as a country-specific conflict but more in terms of how it fits as a part of a much larger global campaign against the jihadists, will be an essential part of our deliberations while in Aspen.

The news on the war on terror front, however, is not all bad. For reasons difficult to fully explain, the American homeland has been spared from further attacks since 9/11, despite deadly bombings elsewhere (Bali, Moscow, Spain, London and Egypt, among scores of other lesser known attacks). Monuments to the fallen in New York, Washington, D.C. and in a Pennsylvania field are being constructed by civically minded organizations so that future generations might better understand our collective sacrifices and ongoing struggles. Perhaps through a combination of an effective prosecution of counter terror tactics (both at home and abroad), close intelligence cooperation with key allies, a significantly degraded leadership structure and operational command at the top of al Qaeda, and mixed with some luck on our part, there have been no aerosol delivered biological attacks, cleverly constructed radiological devices, and no suicide bombings on busy subways during rush hour (at least not yet). Recent polls taken throughout the Muslim world suggest a growing public distaste with the jihadist agenda of violence and terrorism.

There are democratic stirrings, still fragile and ill defined, reaching across the Middle East from Egypt, to Lebanon, to Iraq. There is a growing realization in Europe, especially, that the struggle with Islamic fundamentalism can not be seen as simply an American problem, with many European cities teaming with angry and disaffected Muslim minorities. And, there is an underlying durability in American attitudes when it comes to finishing the job right in Iraq and there are untapped reserves of American patriotism, service, and sacrifice. These are all things that we can build upon, and one of the most important tasks during our deliberations will be to figure out how to sustain some of these positive trends and help arrest and reverse other indicators that are trending in the opposite directions.

DAY I: A NET ASSESSMENT: THE EVOLUTION OF RADICAL ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM SINCE 9/11

The first sessions will be devoted to developing a global snapshot of what is occurring inside the fundamentalist Islamic movement (and to explore, among other questions, whether the various disaffected groups and individuals can truly be said to comprise a coherent movement). While the Islamists operated effectively long before 9/11, the objective of our proceedings is really to examine what has happened inside radical violent Islam since the terrible attacks against the United States. We will seek to examine various trends, including: the status recruitment and training efforts; the ideological, religious, and political currents within the jihadist communities; their interpretations of how the struggles with the United States, Israel, and the West are going to date (do they believe that the United States is overextended or vulnerable inside Iraq and/or have ongoing operations against the legacy of al Qaeda leadership weakened their operational capacities); and what are the likely future directions of the struggle ahead? We are also interested to understand whether bin Laden or any other members of his surviving al Qaeda high command continue to play an operational role in the jihadist struggle. Towards this end, in this initial session we are more interested in answering the question "do we understand the mindsets, organizational dynamics, training, and capabilities of the jihadists?" rather than "Are we winning, losing, or is it too soon to tell, in the struggle against al Qaeda and its associated cohort?" Here below are questions designed to guide our deliberations on this first day:

- Why have all of the attacks since 9/11 been conducted against targets outside the United States (such as the Bali bombing, the just missed attacks against the Indian parliament, the Spanish train bombings, and the London transportation system)?

- How are ideological directives and religious interpretations promulgated among their adherents world-wide?

- Has the experience of al Qaeda – both the sensational success of the 9/11 attacks as well as the subsequent prosecution of its adherents influenced the calculations of other religiously inspired terrorists? Would we even have the ability to know if it had?

- Are there disagreements about whether this is a religiously derived or politically inspired effort or is the distinction meaningless?

- To the extent that such characterizations are useful, are there sign of splintering in the movement, groups trending either to more moderation on the one hand or greater radicalization on the other?

- Is there a geographical center of gravity in the current operations and activities of Islamists worldwide?

- Is there a competition for influence and leadership among the jihadists?

- What role do individuals such as Osama bin Laden and Abu Al Zarqawi play in the movement and ultimately how important are charismatic leaders in the jihadist quest?

- How have widely available tools like the internet been employed both to spread and disseminate virulent interpretations of Islam and to plan and communicate operational details?

- Do we in a fundamental sense — among the expert community and knowledgeable observers — have an understanding or appreciation of what we are struggling against?

DAY II: GLOBAL TRENDS AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES: WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE GROUND IN WESTERN EUROPE AND AMONG THE WAHHABISTS

The rise of radical Islamic insurgents is a truly global phenomenon, but there are distinct regional and country specific characteristics and challenges associated with the jihadists. While Americans normally regard the Middle East as the cockpit of terror, a growing body of evidence suggests that it is in alienated and poorly integrated Muslim communities in Western societies where fundamentalist adherents draw their inspiration, attract their recruits, undertake clandestine training, and plan their operations. For the purposes of our session, we have enlisted experts to explore the crucial dynamics of jihadists activities in two specific regional settings: the Wahhabist heartland of Saudi Arabia and disaffected Islamic ghettos of Western Europe. Saudi has long been thought by experts to be a troubling epicenter of jihadist financing and ideological fervor while the often angry and disenfranchised Muslim communities of Western Europe are emerging as key transmission areas of violence and secret organization. In addition, we have scheduled strategic interventions to focus on the status of fundamentalist activities in two vast and rapidly growing populations of Islamic believers, in Southeast Asia and Africa. Indeed, the hearts and minds struggle for next the generation of Islamic followers is playing out in critical states such as Nigeria, Indonesia, Malaysia, Senegal, and the Philippines where the number of Islamic practitioners easily eclipses the number of religious adherents in the greater Middle East. Here below are some questions to help focus our discussions on the second day:

- What are the key groups and individuals that promulgate jihadist violence?

- What are the attitudes and assessments of officials in Saudi Arabia and Western Europe respectively, about the activities of jihadists in their midst?

- How do mosques and religious schools factor into the recruitment and training of younger Islamic militants?

- What are the sources of grievance that animates radical Islamic ideologies and the promulgation of violent tactics?

- How have military operations in Iraq and continuing disputes between Israelis and Palestinians influenced jihadist mindsets and intentions?

- How much insight does U.S. or other intelligence or law enforcement into the nature of radical recruitment, communication, planning, and financing in these very different environments?

A growing body of evidence suggests that it is in alienated and poorly integrated Muslim communities in Western societies where fundamentalist adherents draw their inspiration, attract their recruits, undertake clandestine training, and plan their operations.

- Is there any sense of urgency associated with the threat posed by fundamentalist adherents in either Saudi Arabia or Western Europe?

DAY III: DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THEIR IMPACT ON RADICALIZATION

There are many factors – changing demographics, differences in religious interpretation, the prospects for economic opportunity, the path and pace of democratization, the status of the war on Iraq, and the search for a durable Middle East peace – that factor into the complex trajectory of the Islamic jihadist movement. In this session, we will seek to focus on a few central trends in the Muslim world in an attempt to drill down and discover how these impact the path and pace of radicalization. Specifically, we will seek to collectively examine how the recent fledgling flirtation with "Democracy" is playing out in the Middle East and elsewhere, and how these democratic trends intersect with a rising fundamentalist fervor. We will explore the rifts and tensions that exist between Sunni and Shia communities in the modern Muslim world and how these have been exacerbated by recent developments in the Middle East. We will also examine how the internet has been effectively utilized as a tool to promulgate radical religious fatwas, to spread the most modern terrorist techniques, and to assist in recruiting young and impressionable believers. In addition, the strategic interventions will help to explore some of the other issues outlined above that are rocking the Islamic world. Special attention will be devoted to examining – throughout the course of our sessions – how developments in Iraq are playing out in the plans of Islamic fundamentalist circles. Here are some of the questions to help guide our discussion during day three of our proceedings:

- How is the advance of democratic habits and institutions likely to influence the concurrent rise of fundamentalist ideology and practitioners?

- How will the Sunni-Shia divide play out in the Middle East, and is there any meaning in it for the larger struggle with extremist tendencies that exist with in Islam?

- How has the Internet been utilized in connecting disaffected Islamic communities world wide into a larger global backlash against Western infidels?

- What is the larger meaning of Iraq in the struggle against the jihadists?

- Has there been any progress in the generally dismal economic picture that permeates much of the Middle East?

- Are there any signs of larger success in efforts designed to "drain the swamp" of prospective jihadist recruits?

- How significant, truly, is the sense of Palestinian suffering and grievance in the larger process of Islamic militancy?

DAY IV: EVOLVING STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN THE WAR ON TERROR: ONGOING MILITARY, INTELLIGENCE, AND POLITICAL OPERATIONS

The most difficult question to answer in the ongoing war on terrorism undoubtedly is: how are we doing? This is largely because of the several factors, such as the many fronts on which the conflict is being waged simultaneously, disagreements over which of these should receive priority of attention and resources in the overall endeavor, and again, the thorny, Rumsfeldian problem of assigning meaningful metrics in determining progress. For the purposes of this meeting we will focus our discussions on the external dimension of U.S. and allied operations, in both the military, intelligence, and law enforcement realms, where we are acting largely on the offensive. Towards this end, we will explore both the tactical dimensions of the current campaign as well as our overall strategic understanding of the nature of the campaign we are waging. For instance, is it useful to conceive of the global war on terrorism as a kind of borderless counterinsurgency? If so, are there any relevant lessons from the history of previous counterinsurgency operations, such as in Malaysia, Vietnam, Greece or elsewhere? Or, is it more useful to compare fighting global jihadists with trying to treat an invasive and aggressive form of biological virus, akin to HIV or SARS? In addition, we need to explore the current stresses being placed on American armed forces and what might be done to alleviate some of these burdens. We will also want to consider how useful our allies have been in this global endeavor and whether Western governments continue to take the threat of potentially apocalyptic terrorism undertaken by jihadists seriously? Furthermore, in addition to the predominantly martial dimensions of the campaign, it important to explore the viability of other political approaches for dealing with our adversaries in this twilight struggle. Here are the questions we would like to address in session four:

- How effectively have U.S. forces and intelligence assets adapted and innovated to the new challenge of waging war against the jihadists?

- Are there indications that jihadist fighters are rethinking elements of their approach to waging war against the West and Israel?

- Are there new capabilities that the United States needs to develop for this campaign? How will the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review respond to these current challenges and those on the horizon coming from Islamic militants?

- How has the crucible of Iraq impacted our capabilities, training, morale, and overall strategies for conducting the global campaign?

- How much strain are the nearly continuous military operations and deployments placing on our armed forces? What can be done to help alleviate these burdens?

- Are there strategic implications in other arenas of the struggle because of our large expenditures of resources (human, financial, and in terms of scarce senior level attention) in Iraq and elsewhere?

- How helpful have our allies been in prosecuting various aspects of this fight? What more (or less) can we expect from them in the future?

- Can we realistically develop any political strategies to augment our coercive measures to advance our cause in the war against terror? For instance, is it conceivable to imagine establishing some kind of deterrence framework with elements of the jihadists? Is some form containment or isolation an option? Could negotiations or ceasefires ever be attempted? How should we think about non-military dimensions of our strategy moving forward?

- Ultimately, are we winning or losing?

Day V: The Road Ahead: What Is To Be Done – Dueling Perspectives and Common Approaches

In our final session, we have asked several ASG participants to offer their perspectives during strategic interventions on the central questions of global significance, namely:

- How serious, ultimately, is the challenge posed by Islamic jihadists to U.S. security and to our larger interests globally?

- Is this threat likely to endure?

- Do we have a sufficient understanding of the nature of our adversary and his methods to be able to usefully construct a strategy to defeat, deter, or de-fang them over time?

- What are the global commonalities and region specific features of the radical Islamist forces arrayed against us?

- And finally, how are we faring, what's working and what's not, and what needs to be done differently if we are to prevail in this contest of wits, weapons, and endurance?

We are looking for a few concise observations from our initial presentations before we open up the meeting for closing comments and suggestions for how to frame the thrust of the concluding section of our report on the fundamental nature of the jihadist threat. We hope to establish areas of common ground as well as to clearly delineate issues of discord. The above questions and prompts, it is hoped, will help shape the contours of our discussions out in idyllic Aspen. Our ultimate objective will be to arrive at some specific recommendations that are "actionable" (in the jargon of Washington), fresh ideas, and policy positions and that can help inform the public debate and also serve to advance the foreign policy and national security of the United Stares.

There are concerns in some quarters – admittedly more overt before the London terror bombings – that the war on terrorism would turn out to be one of history's wrong turns, a societal manifestation of discontent that looked like an enduring threat to our very way of life but ended up being just a global nuisance. After a few years of distraction following an isolated and difficult to replicate combination of attacks, the argument goes, the United States will once again return to constructing a foreign

policy more fitting of a traditional great power. Instead of struggling to effectively use the sledgeham-mer that is American hard power against stateless jihadists, the United States will reposition itself to deal with more familiar state-based national security challenges reminiscent of the Cold War, where metrics might be more easily established and debated. Yet the London attacks, with their apparent intricate coordination and efficient staging, are yet another reminder that the jihadist challenge will likely be enduring and dangerous for years to come. While other issues loom on the horizon, such as China, global climate change, and the future of Russia, all signs point to the Islamic jihad remaining globally significant and menacing in ways that we are only just beginning to understand. Hopefully, we will all leave Aspen knowing a little bit more about this vital topic than when we arrived.

> ## All signs point to the Islamic jihad remaining globally significant and menacing in ways that we are only just beginning to understand.

A Net Assessment:
The Evolution of Radical Islamic
Fundamentalism Since 9/11

Al Qaeda's Evolution Since September 11, 2001

Steve Coll
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Four years after the September 11 attacks, al Qaeda has been transformed under pressure from a formal organization with a corporate shape into a more dispersed movement where leaders have often lost touch with followers and where ideological affiliation has become more important than lines of authority. Al Qaeda's ability to carry off sophisticated attacks on a global scale appears diminished. Some important elements of the original al Qaeda have been destroyed, contained, or co-opted at least temporarily into peaceful politics or proselytizing. Yet the movement's leadership and violent cells of adherents, still determined to carry out mass casualty attacks against the United States and its allies, have successfully regrouped and regenerated, primarily in two venues: Iraq and cyberspace.

The Iraq war has drawn hundreds of al Qaeda-inspired volunteers into a conventional insurgency focused primarily on the U.S. military, its allies, and Iraqi political and civilian targets. The war has complicated bin Laden's focus on the United States by entangling his efforts with such regional and sectarian causes as Iraqi nationalism and anti-Shia militancy. In these respects the war may have drawn off some of al Qaeda's potential and distracted some talented operatives from attempting attacks on civilian or infrastructure targets in the West. Such diversionary effects are impossible to measure. Whatever their extent, however, they appear to have been offset or overtaken by a surge of fresh recruitment inspired in part by the prolonged U.S. occupation in Iraq. This wave of volunteerism has been stimulated as well by the media-savvy, Web-enabled recruiting and communications efforts of the al Qaeda franchise led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The Iraq war has revived al Qaeda's internal sense of purpose, helped recreate the appearance of coherent warfighting hierarchy, bolstered its standing in sections of the Islamic world, facilitated the emergence of new leadership, and created new multinational cadres trained in vicious urban terrorism.

Before 2001, al Qaeda's operations were often carefully planned or at least supervised from headquarters. In an initial period of fury and ambition that followed September 11, the movement and its fugitive leadership unleashed a wave of potent suicide attacks during 2002 and 2003 in areas where it had preexisting regional cells and leadership, such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Morocco, East Africa, and Turkey. As these regional franchises were destroyed or severely pressured, the pattern of al Qaeda-related attacks shifted again. There remained some active regional groups directly tied to the old order, such as in Pakistan and the Persian Gulf emirates. But increasingly, attacks now also arise from spontaneously generated cells that are sometimes inspired or formed on the Internet, with limited or no operational connection to veterans of the original al Qaeda, such as in the cases of Madrid and several other dangerous groups and individuals in Europe who were detected before they could act. As the Madrid bombings showed, these more

spontaneous cells can be as destructive as the old Afghanistan-based military organization, although it may be difficult for them to carry out attacks in the West that require long planning cycles, heavy financial resources, or extensive cross-border movement. As of this writing, less than a week after the attack, it is impossible to be confident about where the four suicide bombers who killed more than 50 civilians riding London's public transport system on July 7 fit in this pattern,

Increasingly, attacks also arise from spontaneously generated cells that are sometimes inspired or formed on the Internet, with limited or no operational connection to veterans of the original al Qaeda.

but the early indications suggest a resemblance to Madrid. Given the length of al Qaeda's most ambitious planning cycles in the past, it is impossible to be confident yet that the absence of such attacks in the United States means that bin Laden's previous headquarters-supported pursuit of spectacular violence on American soil has been fully disrupted. Still, a newer pattern of more regional and spontaneous cells does seem established. As the people of London are the latest to testify, this is not especially reassuring. A more talented or ambitious cell on the pattern of the Leeds four could wreak terrible damage, conceivably with weapons of mass destruction.

Since September 11, some preexisting regional insurgent groups with Islamist elements and nationalist goals have adopted or accelerated the use of al Qaeda-style, spectacular mass casualty suicide attacks, evidently inspired by the example of bin Laden's campaign against the United States. Chechen guerrillas have shown the greatest degree of infection — at the Moscow theater, in their simultaneous bombing of two Russian aircraft and at Beslan. Kashmiri Islamist guerrillas initially adopted similar tactics, but when their raid on India's Parliament late in 2001 nearly set off a war between India and Pakistan, they were forced by their supporters to return to less provocative, traditional guerrilla attacks against local military targets. Overall, there has been an increase in al Qaeda-style attacks among regional groups. A few such groups have an Internet presence that promotes or attracts chatter about violent global ambitions, and there have been a few individual breakouts from those groups, such as an alleged affiliate of Lashkar-e-Taiba (a group primarily active in Kashmir) who planned attacks in Australia. In the Arabic-language chat rooms sponsored by Hamas (which has distanced itself from al Qaeda to protect its local political claims) individual participants speak openly about global goals that echo al Qaeda's ideology.[1]

Still, Islamist insurgent leaders with nationalist aims in the Palestinian territories, Chechnya, Kashmir, and elsewhere have so far followed a pragmatic calculus: Direct attacks against the United States are difficult to pull off, will do little to advance their local political claims, and indeed may jeopardize those claims. While bin Laden, Zawahiri, and their speechwriters, searching for relevancy and audience impact in their fugitive recording studios, often compose fiery odes to Islamist-influenced national insurgent groups, the groups have often declined to return the tribute. An exception to this trend may develop in the land of bin Laden's birth, Saudi Arabia, where al Qaeda-inspired anti-government insurgents, following an 90-year tradition of such violence on the peninsula, do not appear to think much about the political nuances of their attacks, in part because they are fired by passionate Islamic belief and in part because the kingdom has little nuanced politics to distract them.

Overall, al Qaeda has suffered the greatest losses since September 11 in the areas where governments have the greatest power to shatter its formal infrastructure, such as in direct military and counterterrorism operations, detentions, international financial flows, and through political and diplomatic pressure. Al Qaeda has proved the most resilient in the areas where governments can't reach very well, such as clandestine recruitment networks, cross-border proselytizing, ungoverned tribal areas, and cyberspace.

Al Qaeda's announced ambition to carry out or inspire a weapons of mass destruction attack on U.S. soil remains the most important threat to the security of the American homeland. Many analysts assess that a weapon of mass destruction attack by al Qaeda followers "may be only a matter of time," as Director of Central Intelligence, Porter Goss, put it last February.[2] Radiological or "dirty bomb" devices already are easy to make and have strong appeal to desperate, disenfranchised attackers who wish to demonstrate their potency against a military superpower. Such an attack could have high economic and psychological costs but would not likely take many lives, according to the most oft-cited experts in open sources. A biological or nuclear fission bomb attack, while much less likely today because of the technical and operational obstacles, would obviously have the gravest consequences. The barriers to biological attack are likely to drop in coming years as commercial uses of relevant technology spread. A nuclear fission attack would be the most difficult of all, but as the A. Q. Khan network demonstrated vividly, such a cell can develop with private resources or the partial sponsorship of a failing state. Based on their repeated public declarations, there can be little doubt that al Qaeda leaders or its adherents would pursue such an attack if the means were within reach.

> **Al Qaeda's announced ambition to carry out or inspire a weapons of mass destruction attack on U.S. soil remains the most important threat to the security of the American homeland.**

AL QAEDA'S CHANGING DEMOGRAPHY

Amid a general pattern of dispersal since September 11, al Qaeda has retained important sources of coherence and leadership. Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al Zawahiri, remain honored by many important followers as the ideological and spiritual leaders of the movement, even as their operational roles have faded. This is an architecture of bin Laden's own making. "According to Osama bin Laden's thinking, there are no dormant cells," one of his former Yemeni-born bodyguards said in a recent interview. "Every element of al Qaeda is self-activated. Whoever finds a chance to attack just goes ahead. The decision is theirs. This is regardless of whether they pledged allegiance to Sheikh Osama bin Laden or not."[3] The most striking evidence of the central leadership's resilience is the pledge of allegiance to bin Laden issued by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi late last year. In addition, Saudi and other cells continue to cite bin Laden's inspiration and follow his general prescriptions. These declarations have reinforced bin Laden's particular ideology of mass casualty attacks, including his legitimizing of the use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States and its allies. Even as it has become more a movement than an organization, al Qaeda remains specific and dangerous for what it seeks to inspire.

Before September 11, to earn its keep with the Taliban, al Qaeda organized and threw into battle large numbers of conscripted, madrassa-educated teenagers, usually shipped into Afghanistan by bus from Pakistan. Many of these hapless soldiers ended up in U.S. and Afghan government custody. Today, even in Iraq, where there are also many young volunteers, the movement appears to be attract-ing proportionately less cannon fodder and more computer technicians. Increasingly al Qaeda is a leaner, better educated, technically adept movement literally fired by the zeal of converts to Islam, who appear in notable numbers in the ranks of recent vio-lent activists. Partly this change in al Qaeda's census reflects changes in the movement's geographical strength. The movement has lost influence in impov-erished South Asia, where it previously enjoyed sanc-tuary in Afghanistan and unmolested networks of supporters in Pakistan. Europe and the Persian Gulf are today among al Qaeda's most active theaters, regions where it can draw on alienated but often well-educated cadres. Saudi, Yemeni, and European Islamists — many of Moroccan and Algerian origin — are among those whose anger has been most inflamed by the Iraq war, or at least, they are in the best position to act on their anger by traveling to the war as volunteers. Not all of these jihadis have col-lege degrees, to be sure, but on the whole they have greater means and more education than the Pakistani and Taliban conscripts who made up an important wing of al Qaeda in its Afghan heyday.

> **Even as it has become more a movement than an organi-zation, al Qaeda remains specific and dangerous for what it seeks to inspire.**

The personal histories of al Qaeda-affiliated suicide bombers who have participated in attacks after September 11 show that the movement draws on several distinct sources of jihadi radicalism. There still remain at large significant numbers of al Qaeda veterans of pre-September 11 jihadi wars in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, and elsewhere. A second, occasionally overlapping stream of volunteers is now flowing through recruiting pipelines into Iraq — and sometimes, back out again. There are other unaffiliated Islamist veterans of regional insurgencies from Kashmir to Algeria who still float across borders as a kind of jihadi debris, susceptible to recruitment or par-ticipation in a spontaneous cell. In the Persian Gulf, ideological recruitment of young boys and men into austere and often radical *salafi* and *takfiri* groups, sometimes with direct or indirect ties to violent cells in the region, continues essentially unhindered, despite marked improvements by the Saudi government in other fields of counterterrorism. And finally, there is the loose affiliation with al Qaeda goals and violence described earlier, as apparently evidenced by the case of Omar Ahmad Abdullah Ali, an Egyptian computer engineer in a Qatari government office who was inspired earlier this year, apparently without extensive support from formal groups, to drive an explosives-laden vehicle into a local British community theater's performance of *Twelfth Night*. Relatively isolated radicals such as Ali, members of the Madrid cell, and perhaps also the Leeds Four are not a new phenomenon among jihadis — Mir Amal Kasi, the Pakistani who shot dead two CIA employees at the CIA's entrance in 1993 announced the pattern — but they appear to be grow-ing in numbers, in part because of the role played by the Internet in facilitating talk, inspiration, and technical training.

AL QAEDA AND IRAQ

Bin Laden may have welcomed the American-led invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001 because he believed he could fatally bleed a second superpower on that rugged ground. If this was his hypothesis, it failed in part because bin Laden and other Arabs in his isolated leadership group misunderstood how weak and unpopular the Taliban had become among ordinary Afghans. After the United States invaded Iraq and began to face sustained nationalist resistance in Sunni areas, bin Laden and Zawahiri adapted their media messages about a "bleeding superpower" to claim the Iraq war on behalf of their multinational jihad. Their effort to refashion al Qaeda around Iraq's insurgency initially appeared hindered by Zarqawi's independent ambitions. Last autumn, however, al Qaeda's place in Iraq solidified when Zarqawi — seeking the power of al Qaeda's global brand and the cash-stuffed pockets of its Persian Gulf volunteers — pledged allegiance to bin Laden. The pledge has since then become an organizing theme in jihadist Web communications and has benefited both Zarqawi and bin Laden, endowing the former with international credibility and the latter with sustaining relevancy.

Bin Laden's announced aims in Iraq, debated and extended by adherents worldwide, have little to do with that country's political future and much to do with al Qaeda's long campaign against the United States. As he said in his election-eve video last November, bin Laden's goal is to humiliate and bankrupt the United States in Iraq, as he believes (in characteristic self-delusion) his volunteers did in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. He and his closest followers are not interested in governing Iraq and do not talk at all seriously about that challenge. Bin Laden has long seen himself as the vanguard of a global Islamic uprising among the *ummah*, or Muslim community of believers. As this uprising proceeds, he has said, it will ultimately obliterate what bin Laden and his followers regard as the illegitimate borders and nation-states of colonial and secular history, restoring Islamic nations of old and rendering irrelevant knotty problems such as a sustainable Iraqi constitution. To set the *ummah* on the correct revolutionary course, bin Laden believes he must weaken the United States. In 30 years, in the highly unlikely event he is still alive, he might see China similarly; his campaign is not anti-American per se, just as it was not anti-Soviet per se. He seeks to restore Muslim sovereignty by attacking unbelievers who encroach on Islamic prerogatives and aspirations. This enduring outlook helps to explain bin Laden's approach to the Iraqi jihad. His recent messages have linked the pursuit of frontline violence against American troops and allies in Iraq with a broader global campaign against American and Western economic targets. He seeks a Soviet-style economic implosion in the United States. Bin Laden repeatedly emphasizes America's economic vulnerability, in part because of what he describes as its worsening overextension in Iraq. Attempting to justify the human carnage of September 11, which alienated many Muslims, bin Laden has steadily reinterpreted those attacks to emphasize their political and economic impact. Now, in Iraq, against an unpopular occupier, he seeks to resurrect what he regards as his historical role in Afghanistan. "We, alongside the Mujahideen, bled Russia for ten years, until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat," bin Laden said last November. "So we are continuing this policy in bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy."[4]

> **Bin Laden repeatedly emphasizes America's economic vulnerability, in part because of what he describes as its worsening overextension in Iraq.**

AL QAEDA IN CYBERSPACE

The Taliban banned television and even toothbrushes, but al Qaeda, led by educated and privileged gadget-hounds, has adapted early and enthusiastically to the technologies of globalization. Bin Laden used some of the first commercial satellite telephones ever made, and he self-produced propaganda videos with hand-held cameras long before Michael Moore, whose work he has evidently seen and admired. Today, however, bin Laden himself has fallen far behind his own young adherents. He still makes clunky, tedious videotaped speeches that must be broadcast from a television studio; his followers have moved into snuff videos with shock appeal that can be downloaded from the Web by millions. They rely increasingly on password-protected chatrooms, encrypted email and electronic dead drops.[5]

The jihadi movement has regrouped in cyberspace by establishing a digital community that, apart from its ideology and clandestinity, is little different in structure from the cyberworlds of lonely shoe fetish singles, role playing gamers, eBay coin collectors, or rare disease sufferers. In early 2001 if a group of angry Moroccan teenagers in Tangiers decided to join al Qaeda, they made contact with a recruiter at a mosque, received plane tickets to Karachi, rode buses to Kandahar, and took training in isolated rock-strewn camps. Camaraderie and military-style connections among camp members extended al Qaeda's network when the volunteers returned home. Today, unless they can make physical contact with the underground railroad to Iraq, those Moroccan teenagers are likely to turn to their local cyber café. There they can chat with like-minded teens in Canada, Europe, and the Gulf. They can download bomb making instructions, read obscure spiritual tracts, and participate in spirited debate about doctrine, all in the course of an espresso-jolted afternoon. Digital intimacy can be as complete as that established in face-to-face contact, researchers have shown, although such communication carries obvious risks of detection and confusion sewn by adversaries. The jihadi movement appears to be coping with these potential problems so far. Authorized al Qaeda Web sites contain starter kits in cell formation which instruct wannabes to consult with a local Afghan or Bosnia jihad veteran if one can be located. Recruitment into the Iraq jihad pipeline is taking place in substantial part online. One recent posting on a password-protected Zarqawi site gave updated, detailed tips for crossing Syria into Iraq, including the suggestion that volunteers carry fly fishing gear and claim to be heading for a popular local river if detained by Syrian police.[6]

Video propaganda disseminated on the Web has proven more potent and efficient than al Qaeda's old systems of cassette tape distribution and Al Jazeera broadcasts. The global impact of Zarqawi's online beheading of Nicholas Berg — a five and one-half minute video posted on May 11, 2004 — has inspired new waves of short jihadist snuff films posted on the Web. In some cases jihadi insurgents in Iraq appear to have carried out executions or other violent attacks in Iraq solely for the purpose of creating Web-distributed videos. Like bin Laden before him, Zarqawi has gained power more through a creative media strategy than by warfighting alone. The Web's reach and ease of entry have allowed him to carry bin Laden's inspiration far beyond where the al Qaeda founder left off in 2001. This pattern seems likely to continue and to recur outside Iraq.

IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL PATTERNS

Al Qaeda's greatest losses during the last four years have occurred in its efforts to control conventional political space. Not only did it lose its headquarters in Afghanistan, it has been unable

to establish an alternative sanctuary and has lost quiet sources of state sponsorship or tolerance from southeast Asia to Pakistan to the Persian Gulf and North Africa. While the overall pattern of allied state action against al Qaeda contains many zigzags and a few important resistors, in general, led by the United States, global governments have been effective in using the most obvious levers of state power — armies, police, border patrols, communications surveillance, financial controls – to attack al Qaeda's former leadership and infrastructure.

An important enduring political strength of al Qaeda is its connection to well-funded *salafi* and *takfiri* proselytizing and recruitment institutions in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. The ideological recruitment cycle of young teenagers in the Gulf and elsewhere — the same systematic recruitment cycle that radicalized bin Laden as a teenager — remains largely unpressured. It constitutes a rare but significant exception to the global trend of reduced face-to-face contact among al Qaeda leaders and volunteers. The Gulf-rooted proselytizing and recruitment networks clearly are pumping young jihadis into Iraq, for instance, using a close-knit underground railroad that resembles the old jihad patterns in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

It is more difficult to measure al Qaeda's performance in the broader ideological and political debates now roiling the Islamic world. Here, too, the movement faces sources of pressure. Sufi and Shia competitors within Islam's internal wars over ideas and identity have gained some strength since September 11. Notionally peaceful Sunni Islamist politicians sympathetic to al Qaeda in such crucial countries as Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia have made only incremental advances since September 11, albeit in some cases because hostile governments have pressed the state's boot to their necks. Osama bin Laden remains a very popular figure among many Muslims, and his critique of American power is widely subscribed, more so now than before September 11, if polling is to be credited. Yet his fantasy of a world transformed through acts of mass violence has also been exposed and denounced as hollow and self-defeating in many quarters.

> **Arab and Islamist intellectuals express little doubt that democratization, over time, will diminish al Qaeda's potency by drawing ambitious bin Laden sympathizers into peaceful, local political competition.**

A parallel steep fall in American popularity and credibility among Muslims has been well-documented. In spite of its diminished standing in public opinion, through its promotion of the ideal of democratic reform, the United States has helped change the subject in the Middle East from the legitimacy of its policies to that question and the legitimacy of unelected Arab governments. Even when they deeply resent the U.S. government, as they often do, Arab and Islamist intellectuals express little doubt that democratization, over time, will diminish al Qaeda's potency by drawing ambitious bin Laden sympathizers into peaceful, local political competition. This prospect is being measured, at the same time, against al Qaeda's success in tying down American forces in Iraq and inhibiting the birth of a new government there. At yet another violent intersection in Middle Eastern history, many fence-sitting Arabs remain focused, often worriedly, on the uncertain outcome of the war and democratic experiment in Iraq.

Endnotes

1   The Salafi Group for Call and Combat, rooted in Algeria, and Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistani-sponsored guerrilla group active in Indian-held Kashmir, often are cited as the two regional Sunni Islamist groups with the greatest potential to break out and attack the United States directly. Because of its connections to the alienated Algerian diaspora in Europe, Salafi followers include some unusually mobile and well-educated followers. Lashkar appears to be a less likely source of breakout attacks, at least for now. Rapprochement between India and Pakistan has led the latter government to insist that Lashkar limit its military ambitions. The cases of Lashkar breakout on record – such as that of the French convert to Islam, Willie Brigitte, accused of casing targets in Australia – appear not to reflect the ambitions of the group's leadership, but rather some accidents of Jihadi history and geography during the fall of 2001. After the September 11 attacks, jihadi volunteers arrived in Pakistan to join resistance to the American campaign in Afghanistan. Because they could not enter Afghanistan, many of these volunteers ended up in pre-existing Lashkar training camps on the Kashmir front, where they met like-minded international jihadists. The volunteers trained for a while and dispersed, some carrying a notional Lashkar affiliation with them. The "paintball" cell prosecuted successfully in Northern Virginia in 2004 followed this path, as did Brigitte.

2   Goss testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee, February 17, 2005.

3   "Al-Qaeda From Inside As Narrated by Abu Jandal, bin Laden's Personal Guard (Part 10, Last Episode)," Al-Quds Al-Arabi, April 4, 2005, FBIS translation.

4   "Al-Jazirah Site Posts 'Full Transcript' of bin Ladin's Message," November 1, 2004, FBIS translation.

5   By using an electronic dead drop, two individuals continents apart can avoid sending an email that might be intercepted. One party opens a free email account, writes a message, then saves it as a draft. In a password-protected chat room, he provides his account name and password to a second party or has it relayed to a third party, who then opens the account and reads the draft. The message is passed, but no vulnerable electronic transmission has occurred.

6   Details of the Syria posting and several other translated jihadi messages described in this paper are from Rebecca Givner-Fobes, an Arabi-speaking analyst at the Terrorism Research Center, Fairfax, Virginia. Her group distributes a client-subscribed newsletter titled *Terror Web Watch*.

Global Trends and Regional Perspectives: What's Happening on the Ground in Western Europe and Among the Wahhabists

Europe and Islamic Fundamentalism

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[M]illions of the new generation of Muslims in Europe have become a source of fear and anxiety for decision-makers in European countries. This is because the new generation has fallen under the influence of extremist fundamentalists who interpret Islam as they see fit…[T]hose who speak falsely in the name of Islam have turned the Islamic presence in Europe and America into a presence of conflict instead of coexistence. – Ahmad Abu Matar[1]

When Emmanuel Sivan, the great scholar of radical Islam, wrote in 2002 that "al Qaeda is a problem of the Muslim diaspora," the assertion raised eyebrows among students of the subject and counterterrorism experts.[2] In the years since, however, many have come around to his view or to a partial revision of it that includes the Muslim periphery — especially such areas as Southeast Asia, the Caucasus, and South Asia. The ideological origins of the global jihad can be found in the theorizing of the Egyptians who killed President Anwar Sadat in 1981 and the thought of the Saudi radicals who took over the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979. But the action has since moved elsewhere for three reasons: The successful crackdown on jihadists within the Arab world in the 1980s and 1990s, the experience of the mujahedin in Afghanistan, and the development of jihadist thought to give priority to the "far enemy," the United States and the West, over the "near enemy," the authoritarian regimes of the Muslim world. To be sure, America's invasion of Iraq has opened a new theater for jihadists in the heart of the Arab world, and the recent bombings in Egypt suggest that radical currents are flowing from the periphery to the core. But with its current focus on an external enemy, jihadist ideology is now ideally adapted to mobilize the discontented in regions where Muslim identity is challenged — where believers and infidels meet.

On the roster of those regions, Europe is at or very near the top. The radicalism of its Muslim population is increasingly a subject of concern for the continent's governments, the United States, and even some Middle Eastern Muslims, such as the reform-minded Palestinian academic who wrote the passage cited in this paper's epigraph. As home to the world's largest Muslim diaspora — roughly 20 million people — Europe is at the heart of the ongoing battle over Muslim identity. The danger there of jihadist violence is as great as anywhere outside Iraq.

For ordinary Europeans, the March 2004 bombings in Madrid were the first indication that all was not safe. These attacks punctured the widely shared post-9/11 belief that the United States was

the only target jihadists cared greatly about, and that Europe would most likely continue to be nothing more than a staging platform for attacks across the Atlantic. That the wake-up call – which many in Europe still ignored — came relatively long after the cataclysm of 9/11 was not due so much to a change in jihadist targeting but a string of terrorist failures. European intelligence services estimate that they have thwarted as many as 30 spectaculars planned by radical Islamists in this period.[3] Extremists tried to bomb the Strasbourg Cathedral and the U.S. air force base in Kleine Brogel, Belgium in 2001. A cell in London was broken up in 2003 while conspiring to produce the toxic agent ricin, which it planned to put in tins of face cream to be sold at drug stores. Word of an impending MANPADs attack at Heathrow led to a near-shutdown of the airport that same year, and in 2004, six men were arrested on terrorism charges after it was discovered that they had purchased more than 1200 pounds of fertilizer in preparation for making an ANFO bomb. In Germany the al Tawhid network planned a series of attacks against Jewish targets, and the list goes on. As one British official put it before the Underground attacks of July 2005, "We've been very, very lucky." In light of a Home Office estimate of 10,000 to 15,000 British Muslims who 'actively support' al Qaeda or related groups," strong evidence that Abu Musaab al Zarqawi's network is growing in Germany and elsewhere, and reports of jihadist recruits for Iraq that number may be in the thousands, the verdict remains a fair one even after the carnage of July 7. [4]

> **Jihadist ideology is now ideally adapted to mobilize the discontented in regions where Muslim identity is challenged — where believers and infidels meet.**

THE ACCIDENTAL DIASPORA

Europe's trouble arises from a welter of causes, some related to the origins of the diaspora – itself an unprecedented phenomenon in Muslim history — others having more to do with the global crisis of authority in the Islamic world. Most of the continent's Muslims arrived in the 1950s and 1960s as workers to fill postwar Europe's labor shortage, and they stayed on in countries that, for the most part, neither expected nor wanted to integrate them into their societies. It soon became apparent, however, that there was no easy way to send these workers back or to stanch the flow of family members seeking reunification with loved ones — let alone to stop them from having children.

As a result, Europe has sleepwalked into an awkward multiculturalism. Its Muslim residents, many of them now citizens, live for the most part in ghetto-like segregation, receive second-rate schooling, and suffer much higher unemployment and under-employment than the general population. In Britain, for example, Muslims have three times the unemployment rate of the entire population — only 48 percent of the Muslim population is working, well below the 68 percent level for the population as a whole — and the country's 10 most underprivileged districts were home to three times as many Muslims as non-Muslims. (By contrast, America's Muslim community, earns more than the national average, has less concentrated patterns of settlement and has been better educated that the majority of the country.)

UNHAPPY NEIGHBORS

Not surprisingly, Britain's Muslims are not particularly happy with how they are treated by the wider society. One-third of them say that either they or someone they personally know has been subjected to abuse or hostility because of their religion; over half say that the position of Muslims has worsened since the Iraq war began in March 2003. Two in three stated that anti-terrorism laws are applied unfairly against Muslims, nearly half would oppose an oath of allegiance to Britain, and 70 percent think that Muslims are politically underrepresented.[5] Britain is generally given high marks as the country in Europe that has done the most to integrate its Muslim population.

Although the news media have paid much attention in recent years to the reemergence of European anti-Semitism, a burgeoning anti-Muslim sentiment could be both more dramatic and consequential; it is already helping to drive the deepening alienation of European Muslims. In France, researchers found that 24 percent of those they spoke with conceded a dislike of North Africans, the largest Muslim group in the nation, and 62 percent told pollsters that Islamic values were incompatible with the French Republic.[6] A larger percentage said that they considered Islam to be an intolerant religion, and over half of the respondents stated that there are too many immigrants in France — immigrants, of course, being code for Muslims.[7] The situation in Germany is similar. A 2004 survey showed that 70 percent of Germans believe that "Muslims do not fit in Western society," and over 80 percent associate Islam with the word "terrorism."[8] In Britain, one in ten people think that peaceful coexistence of non-Muslims and Muslims in Britain is impossible. One in three disagreed with the statement, "In general, Muslims play a valuable role in British society," and two-thirds thought that Britain's Muslims do "little" or "nothing" to promote tolerance.[9]

Europe has sleepwalked into an awkward multiculturalism.

The sense of antipathy Muslims encounter in Europe is not just a matter of quiet slights at work or on the street. In recent years, a number of European leaders have made comments that display a remarkable hostility. In 2001, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi set off an international furor when he declared the superiority of European civilization to that of Islam. "We should be confident of the superiority of our civilization, which consists of a value system that has given people widespread prosperity in those countries that embrace it, and guarantees respect for human rights and religion," Mr. Berlusconi said. "This respect certainly does not exist in Islamic countries," he added, and the West, "is bound to occidentalize and conquer new people. It has done it with the Communist world and part of the Islamic world, but unfortunately, a part of the Islamic world is 1,400 years behind. From this point of view, we must be conscious of the strength and force of our civilization."[10] More recently, the Queen of Denmark announced flatly that "We are being challenged by Islam these years — globally as well as locally. It is a challenge we have to take seriously. We have let this issue float about for too long because we are tolerant and lazy. We have to show our opposition to Islam and we have to, at times, run the risk of having unflattering labels placed on us because there are some things for which we should display no tolerance."[11]

THE MAKING OF A TERRORIST

Not surprisingly, marginality has been a key characteristic of the continent's terrorists. The Madrid cell was composed of men on the edge — drug dealers, part-time workers, drifting stu-

dents, all of them North African immigrants. The Hamburg cell members who carried out the 9/11 attacks came from better off families in the Gulf, Lebanon and Egypt, but, in their time in Germany, they developed few ties to the country and much hatred for it. This class of potential terrorists will likely continue to exist for as long as Europe absorbs cheap labor from North Africa and accepts students from Muslim countries.

The rise of radicalism among European-born Muslim youth also owes underscores the lack of integration. European Muslims, like their non-Muslim peers, now have more identity choices than were available in the past. At a time when more Frenchmen, Britons and Germans call themselves Europeans, an increasing number of Muslims in these and other countries are identifying themselves first and foremost as Muslims. A 2002 survey of Muslims in Great Britain showed 41 percent of the respondents under 35 years of age described themselves as solely "Muslim," rather than "British and Muslim," which was one of the other choices on the questionnaire.[12] Much the same trend has been documented in France, as well, where the proportion of Muslims who identified themselves as "believing and practicing" increased by 25 percent between 1994 and 2001.[13] Moreover, as the three-decade old global religious revival known as Islamization has deepened, a growing number of European Muslims hold religious beliefs that lead them to reject the dominant culture and to choose instead isolation and often opposition. This is a result of the increasing strength of the Salafist movement, which emphasizes the emulation of the salaf, "the men of old," of the time of the Prophet and the earliest generations of Islam.[14]

> **Although the news media have paid much attention in recent years to the reemergence of European anti-Semitism, a burgeoning anti-Muslim sentiment could be both more dramatic and consequential.**

Salafism insists on the inerrancy of Muslim scripture and what might be a called strict constructionist brand of sharia or religious law. For rootless immigrants and disaffected second-generation youths in Europe, Salafism provides the attraction of the authentic. It appeals to young Muslims as a way to differentiate themselves from their parents and grandparents because it is seen as pure, stripped of the local, superstitious and customary usages of their families' countries of origin. It confers a sense of moral superiority while its strictures offer welcome constraints, especially in the diaspora, where the surrounding culture is viewed as irredeemably licentious.

It also creates a sense of transnational identity, of belonging to a greater whole that supercedes the individual's membership in a national or ethnic community. In a Salafi universe, a Muslim can trust that his beliefs and way of life are shared in practical, temporal detail with like-minded Muslims everywhere. He or she is then a member of the *umma*, a community in which the ethnic, ritual, linguistic, and political differences that sundered the realm of Islam after the golden age of the early caliphs have been utterly dissolved. Moreover, in a world that offers ever fewer physical boundaries – where the borders between the historic *dar al Islam* (the realm of Islam or submission) and *dar al harb* (realm of war) appear to have dissolved — the Salafist approach to Islam provides boundaries of another kind on community, diet, dress, comportment, and daily routine. Traditional Jews would recognize much in this way of life, since rabbinic Judaism has fostered a similar approach through *halakha* — the law, literally "the way" — that regiments life and creates a daunting array of impediments to close relations with non-Jews and non-observant Jews.

The problem, however, with the new transnational Muslim identity is that it comes with a sense of universal grievance. The local and the global can no longer be distinguished. Now, the sufferings of Muslims everywhere have become even more palpably the responsibility of every Muslim. Oppression in Chechnya, Palestine, Kashmir, or Iraq is seen as part of a larger conflict pitting Muslims against their persecutors everywhere and simultaneously. The struggle of Kashmiri Muslims is the jihad of British Muslims. The conflict in Palestine might appear to be a local shepherds' war to Americans, but from the perspective of a certain kind of *umma* member, the battle is taking place not just in Gaza, but also in Paris, Casablanca, and Mombasa. For many Muslims, the world is increasingly becoming a single undifferentiated battlefield, and for Salafis, in particular, the sense of beleaguerment is acute. Like all fundamentalists, they see themselves as an embattled, chosen few who must defend against hostile encroachments of secularism, materialism, and what they see as a pervasive anti-Muslim conspiracy. The force behind these menaces is held to be the United States, Israel, and the West — in short, the infidel.[15]

> **The sufferings of Muslims everywhere have become even more palpably the responsibility of every Muslim.**

The spread of Salafism in Europe has been facilitated in part by a lack of homegrown clerics. The number of mosques has grown dramatically in the past decade along with the sharp increase in Muslim population, but Europe does not have the thousands of clerics needed to meet this need. Muslim communities in Europe typically rely on clerics from the Middle East and South Asia for religious guidance and leadership in prayer. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, North Africa, and Pakistan have been producing a surplus of imams, but many of them Salafists who are hostile to secular European values. The result is that Salafist clerics wield an outsized influence on the debate over the evolving shape of Islamic belief and practice in Europe.

JIHAD WIRED

Perhaps even more important for the rise of Islamist radicalism has been the influence of the Internet. The link between advances in communications technology and social change is a well-mined historical theme. Just as writing allowed the priesthoods of the great religions to eclipse local cults, and the printed book enabled people to think beyond tribal boundaries and conceive of themselves as nations, the Internet has spawned a universe of new communities. For individual Muslims, the Internet has provided the means to transcend their surroundings and participate in the new *umma*. It is the delivery vehicle *par excellence* for a set of powerful ideas, which now ricochet around the world with light speed. Sermons from Saudi Arabia, communiqués from the jihad, instruction on proper Islamic behavior, history lessons, Quranic exegesis — all these flicker onto millions of computer screens or land in email inboxes daily. Where there are few computers, adherents queue in the Internet café or print the message and circulate it that way. Without the Internet bin Laden still could have taken his jihad global — video tapes and compact discs were already spreading the word before Netscape — but its growth would be at a comparative snail's pace.

For those who wish to deepen their devotion, the Islamist web provides a slippery slope that may easily lead to the embrace of violent jihad. There is an abundance of sites that provide religious guidance in one way or another. But these sites inevitably include content related to the plight of Muslims in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Iraq and exhortations about the duties these travails impose on

all Muslims. Indeed, if someone looking for answers on an issue of observance regarding food or dress and follows one link or another, it is a good bet that he or she will soon be confronted with the imperative of jihad in terms like those posted on "Islahi.net" in a scolding letter from a Saudi sheikh: "You who shirk jihad. . . How can you enjoy life and comfort while your noble sisters are being raped and their honor is defiled in the Abu Ghraib prison. . . . What are you waiting for?"

The democratizing influence of the Internet has been widely touted by its advocates in the West, but flinging open the doors of public debate in the Muslim world has thus far not been exactly salubrious. The Internet has deepened the challenge to the authority of establishment clerics. A new breed of upstart "clerics," most without formal training, have established for themselves a large following. Many of them are radical and have little patience for such niceties as the historic ban on anyone but the caliph calling for jihad, and they are also eroding the barriers to violence against non-combatants. Additionally, the cult of the martyrdom operation — suicide bombing — has been enhanced dramatically by the online veneration of those who have carried out such attacks. One might have imagined that this cultural import from the Shia world would take a considerable amount of time to take root in Sunni soil. But the reality has been otherwise: Images of "martyrs" and encomia to their works are all over the jihadist web. The rise of suicide operations by Sunnis has been well documented and could hardly be more dramatic[16] Most of these attacks, of course, have been in Iraq, and the overwhelming majority of recent suicide bombings were carried out by Sunnis. But the London bombers were suicide operatives, and the Madrid bombers, who blew themselves up when police confronted them in the suburb of Leganes, should be counted as such too.

An example of just how potent the salafist sense of global grievance — indeed universal war — can be when it is amplified through the Internet is provided by the case of Mohammed Bouyeri, the assassin of the Dutch film director and provocateur, Theo van Gogh. Mohammed Bouyeri, was a twenty-six-year-old dual citizen of Morocco and the Netherlands. If one had encountered him just a few years earlier, he would have looked like an immigrant success story. From a working class family of immigrants, Bouyeri had graduated from the Dutch secondary school system and had worked in social services within Amsterdam's Muslim community. He seemed to be the sort of child of immigrants who would make something of his life in the Holland.

Bouyeri's radicalization appears to have been caused by a series of experiences involving events of varying proximity: these included the invasion of Iraq, his failure to win a grant for a community center, and the death of his mother. After these setbacks, he was primed for violence through participation in the virtual umma of the Internet. His initial foray was in the online debate about the appropriate status of women in Islam. As his convictions hardened, he moved on to jihadist websites, of which there are probably several thousand. His recruitment to battle did not take place in a mosque or through exposure to a fiery imam calling young men to war, but rather in late-night bull sessions with a circle of other angry young men who were not members of any organization.

Bouyeri ultimately singled out van Gogh because of the movie he had made with outspoken Dutch-Somali legislator Hirsi Ali, *Submission*, which is sharply critical of the treatment of Muslim women. Yet in the manifesto that Bouyeri pinned — with a kitchen knife — to van Gogh's chest after murdering him, the movie never came up. He addressed Hirsi Ali and denounced her crime, which was a legislative proposal that Muslim job applicants in the Netherlands be screened for their ideological leanings, a move designed to put pressure on radical Islamists by making it harder for

them to get work. Bouyeri saw this proposal of an ideological litmus test as being somehow linked to the global battle against Islam. He included in his letter a screed against Jews, and a variety of complaints about Iraq, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Palestine. In Bouyeri's mind, the global and the local were fused.

THE MATTER OF IRAQ

There was undoubtedly great discontent among European Muslims before the United States toppled the regime of Saddam Hussein. But the invasion of Iraq had the effect of turbo-charging that unhappiness, and there can be little doubt that the occupation had a catalytic effect on the some who committed violent acts. Among those with a deepening preoccupation with membership in the new *umma*, the decisiveness and drama of jihad is compelling — and bin Laden's example speaks powerfully. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the war in Iraq has inflamed the sense that Muslims are under attack everywhere; that hatred of America, already a constitutive part of the new transnational identity, has deepened; and that more young Muslims are prepared to commit their lives to violence. The opinions of European Muslims about America generally track with the opinion in their home countries, so it is a safe bet that we have very few defenders among them. The core al Qaeda argument — that the United States and its allies seek to occupy Muslim lands and destroy Islam — has won a following because of its obvious affinity for some Muslims' feelings about the West. However benign we may think our intentions were, the invasion confirmed the thinking of some Muslims in Europe that Osama bin Laden's description of America is more apt.

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The Madrid bombers were obsessed with Iraq. They delighted in the videotape that showed Iraqis rejoicing alongside the bodies of seven Spanish intelligence agents who were killed outside Baghdad in November 2003. They spoke of the need to punish Spain for supporting America — one of the leaders of the plot, Jamal Ahmidan, spoke of his desire to blow up the Bernabeu stadium, home of the legendary soccer power Real Madrid. At least one of the conspirators actively recruited others to travel to Iraq and fight in the insurgency. They began work on their plot the day after hearing an audiotaped in which bin Laden threatened "all the countries that participate in this unjust war [in Iraq] — especially Britain, Spain, Australia, Poland, Japan, and Italy." It had been the first time Spain had been mentioned in an al Qaeda hit list. Iraq was prominent in Muhammad Bouyeri's list of grievances, and we may well find that Iraq played a role in the motivation of London's terrorists as well. According to a British intelligence assessment from June 2005, "Events in Iraq are continuing to act as motivation and a focus of a range of terrorist related activity in the U.K."[17] A Muslim community leader in Leeds noted, "You could not have a civilized conversation with him

[Mohammad Sidique Khan, the apparent leader of the group that attacked the Underground] on Iraq," though his opinions were not far from average among local Muslims.[18]

Events in Iraq are also providing some Muslims in Europe and elsewhere a novel experience via the Internet. Because of the constant posting by insurgents of video clips of their operations, Iraq can be experienced as a virtual war — and one dramatically different from the endless series of military defeats at the hands of non-Muslims that most Muslims know. Instead of a tragedy, the scenes are part of a heroic epic. Indeed, the filming is an integral part of the overall operation — the footage is dramatic precisely because the cameraman is part of the combat unit, there to document a planned attack or execution, not a journalist waiting for something to happen nearby. The effect they strive for is exaltation, not disenchantment. What, after all, was the tape of four American contractors being trampled and hacked to death in Fallujah April 2004 but a downmarket version of Hector being dragged through the streets of Troy? And the most popular are the most grisly: The videos of beheadings are posted on numerous sites at once to prevent them from crashing from too many hits. They seem to be effective motivating agents. After he killed van Gogh with a gun, Bouyeri slit his victim's throat. A set of decapitation videos was later found in the assassin's apartment.

ORGANIZATION AND LINKAGES

The last year's string of attacks begs the obvious question of linkages: What kind of ties did the terrorists of Madrid, Amsterdam, and London have to al Qaeda or other jihadist groups? There can be no doubt about the ideological connection; the multiple, nearly-simultaneous bombings are a kind of homage to Osama bin Laden, and accounts of the individuals involved in each of these operations make clear their embrace of al Qaeda's thinking.

The story is very different, however, when it comes to organizational ties. In the case of Madrid, there were very few such connections. Several members of the Madrid cell had been acolytes of the radical Islamist Imad Eddin Yarkas, more often known as Abu Dahdah. A Syrian who had fled the brutal crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s, Abu Dahdah was connected with the network of veterans of the jihad in Afghanistan and had passed on the al Qaeda world view to his followers. But he was arrested after 9/11 — a development that increased the Madrid cell's sense of embattlement. Members of the cell had contacts with a number of Moroccan jihadists who were later arrested in Morocco in connection with the 2003 bombings in Casablanca. But of those involved in the March 11 attacks, only one, an Algerian named Allekma Lamari, had any previous involvement in terrorism — he is said to have been a member of the Algerian GIA, though the details of this activity remain vague. Although many of the facts of the Spanish investigation have yet to be made public, Spanish officials have indicated that the Madrid cell was one of self-starters. They appear not to have been trained, directed, or funded by outsiders from al Qaeda or any other group. Some contacts may yet be revealed, but at the moment, Europe's worst terrorist attack appears to have been carried out by highly motivated amateurs. In Amsterdam, the story is similar. A couple of members of Buoyeri's group, known as the Hofstadt Gang, had traveled to Afghanistan and been in jihadist circles, and there were contacts with radical imams in Europe. But their activities, too, were primarily self-directed and inspired by outside events and the Internet.

For the London crew, it is too early to answer. The three men from Leeds could have been in touch with al Muhajiroun or Hizb ut-Tahrir, extremist groups that operate in the country. Much attention has been focused on the fact that the members of the cell traveled to Pakistan in the year

before the attacks, where they may have received indoctrination and training from Pakistani jihadist groups, such as Lashkar-e-Tayyba, whose terrorist camps have hosted other non-Pakistani radicals. This, after all, is similar to what Muhammad Atta and his fellow-members in the Hamburg cell did, though they traveled to bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan. It also entirely possible that the men were self-starters, men who effectively recruited themselves and decided to seek out radicals in Pakistan as a result of a growing interest in jihad. In the era of globalization, the pathways of radical influence and attraction can run in any number of directions. Whatever the case, we should not assume that all self-starters are as independent as the Madrid cell. A wide range of relationships with other groups, cells, and networks is possible, and there is still a network, with multiple byways and channels.

> **Europe has been generally strong on the tactical matters of intelligence and law enforcement and weaker on the long-term problems of dealing with its unhappy Muslims.**

EUROPE RESPONDS

In handling the challenge before it, Europe has been generally strong on the tactical matters of intelligence and law enforcement and weaker on the long-term problems of dealing with its unhappy Muslims. It is true that in Madrid and Amsterdam, the attacks occurred because the governments fumbled. In Spain, several tips were received about suspicious activity, but the recipients were police dealing with counter-narcotics — the attack was financed with a hashish deal — who did not realize what was before them. Surveillance of some conspirators that might have led to a disruption of the attack was curtailed because of the need for additional men to handle the security at the wedding of the Spanish prince. In Amsterdam, Bouyeri's Hofstadt Gang was also under intermittent surveillance, but the group had an informer who told them when they were not being covered. In retrospect, these seem like enormous gaffes. In practice, most countries do not improve their counterterrorism performance until there has been an attack. Given the number of conspiracies that have been thwarted, Europe has done well.

Part of the reason for its success has been excellent coordination with the United States, whose intelligence community is now the hub of an international network of services that are working, in the estimation of officials on both sides of the Atlantic, better than ever. Recent reporting on the "Alliance Base" joint venture involving the CIA and French intelligence — it appears to be a bilateral operations center of sorts — underscores this closeness.[19] Europeans complain about a lack of intelligence sharing, and improvements in this area would be helpful. Moreover, the durability of this cooperation will be tested if there are further transatlantic tensions like those of 2003, the *annus horribilis* of Iraq. For now, however, the greater challenge lies in improving intra-European cooperation, where, ironically, service to service relationships can be more fragile. This depth of the problem came to light after the Underground attacks in July 2005, when French officials publicly commented on British investigations and apparently disclosed sensitive material. The ensuing public spat was remarkably bitter, and the breach evidently has not been healed. (Rivalries between different agencies within some national governments have also been cited as a

problem in building European-wide cooperation.) The European Union has sought to establish a role in counterterrorism, appointing a coordinator for related issues, launching an action plan and introducing the European wide arrest warrant. But, not surprisingly, in the sensitive area of intelligence, national governments have shown a reluctance to surrender sovereignty. With an array of differing threat perceptions, efforts at integration will be difficult, and, if violence increases, it is not clear that many members will approve of moving any competencies to Brussels. The reaction after the London bombings may be indicative: Several countries introduced rafts of new legislation — as happened after 9/11 and Madrid — and France reinstituted border controls under an emergency clause of the Schengen agreement.

Faced with the long-term issue of its discontented Muslims, Europe has been slower to move. National security services often recognize the problem but politicians have been disinclined to take up the unpopular issue. In part, this has been true because the suggestion that Europe might be targeted would be hard to make without seeming to buy into an American world view, now distinctly unpopular on the other side of the ocean. In addition, at a time when European citizens are increasingly worried about rising unemployment, shrinking demographics, national identity (in tandem with debates over the EU Constitution), and crime — which is often associated with Muslims — promoting multiculturalism and costly integration programs are virtually unthinkable. After the London bombings, this may change, but there is real resilience in the conviction of many Europeans that theirs are not "immigration countries," and those who arrive must adapt.

The job of promoting integration is made more difficult in a number of ways. European officials complain with some justification that they have difficulty finding Muslim leaders with whom they can to deal. And, in truth, most national Muslim communities are deeply fractured along sectarian lines, both between Sunni and Shia, within the different Sunni groupings, and along national and ethnic lines. Britain, with its Muslim Council, is an exception. Typically, European Muslims have been unable to agree on cooperation and representation because of the perception that official status will lead to state funding, which, in turn, they are reluctant to share. Thus, to cite the outstanding example, the more than 3 million Muslims in Germany have no overarching organization and no state subsidies, while the Protestant and Catholic churches and the Jewish community — membership 104,000 — are officially recognized and receive public funds.

Despite the difficulties, a small number of integration initiatives have been launched in the last decade across Europe. For example, most countries have created Muslim Councils, Spain and the Netherlands are now teaching Islamic subjects in primary and secondary schools, and the UK and the Netherlands have strengthened anti-discrimination laws. France is also considering a broader strategy of "positive discrimination," which is currently quietly being tried at Sciences Po where students from disadvantaged backgrounds (mostly Muslims) are allowed to skip the competitive entrance exam. Efforts have also been made to halt or slow recruitment by deporting radical imams, training and licensing moderate imams, and passing anti-hate legislation. But many of these initiatives are obviously insufficient and, in some cases, have actually bred more, not less, extremist sentiment. In the years ahead, Europeans will have to be much more imaginative in tackling their integration problem. Additional, bolder ideas could be implemented, including head start programs for Muslim preschoolers, greater language and literacy training for Muslim mothers, watchdog groups to monitor integration and religious freedom, and revised citizenship laws.

A GLOOMY FORECAST

What is going on in Europe is more than a matter of a bad atmosphere: Europe's right-wing political parties have profited significantly from popular antipathy to Islam and have made real inroads by stressing anti-immigration politics. In the 2002 presidential election in France, Jean-Marie Le-Pen of the National Front won a place in the runoff against incumbent Jacques Chirac. Belgium's Flemish Bloc, Denmark's People's Party, Italy's Northern League, and Switzerland's People's Party have all registered gains, though none has actually gained power. In Britain, Conservative Party leader Michael Howard focused his 2005 election campaign against Prime Minister Tony Blair on an anti-immigration theme. The ascendancy of nativist sentiment has meant that the center is moving to the right; popular support for the liberal policies that have long characterized the relationship between state and society within Europe has diminished. Among the first fruits of the rightward shift has been the ban on headscarves in French schools and the Dutch decision to expel 26,000 asylum seekers from the Netherlands. The next steps will likely be in the realm of tightened law enforcement and immigration controls. European Muslims will interpret these measures as being directed against them and may become even more defensive and less interested in assimilation. Thus unfolds a dynamic of alienation, with the Christian Europeans becoming increasingly hostile to the self-segregating Muslims.

> **Tensions will worsen in the coming years as Europe's demographic crisis and its antipathy to outsiders sharpen — as Christian Europe continues to shrink and Muslim Europe grows.**

These tensions will worsen in the coming years as Europe's demographic crisis and its antipathy to outsiders sharpen — as Christian Europe continues to shrink and Muslim Europe grows.[20] Approximately one million Muslims arrive in Western Europe every year, about half seeking family reunification and half in search of asylum. As many as another half a million are believed to be entering the EU illegally. More important is the fact that the fertility rate among these immigrants is triple that of other Europeans. Consequently, the Muslim population is younger than the non-Muslim population, and Europe's Muslim population is likely to double from about 15 million in 2005 to 30 million by 2025. At the same time, current projections show that Europe's non-Muslim population is stagnant or shrinking. Europe could well be 20 percent Muslim by 2050. Bernard Lewis may turn out to be right in his prediction that by the end of the twenty-first century the European continent would be "part of the Arabic west, the Maghreb."[21]

Animosity between Muslims and non-Muslims is likely to grow. Some of the greatest irritants will be over matters of religious practice: wearing headscarves, obtaining halal meat — ritual slaughter is controversial in several European countries and is banned in Switzerland because it is seen an inhumane — and the provision of workplace facilities for prayer five times a day. The socioeconomic problems that make the lives of many Muslims in Europe miserable — ghettoization, unemployment, lower wages, unequal access to education, and discrimination in the workplace — are unlikely to disappear and the resulting discontent is likely to be expressed in religious terms. Against this background of anomie, jihad can look good to young European Muslims. It is empowering, promising the chance to do something dramatic, to assert oneself and punish one's tormenters.

If the attacks multiply, the consequences for intercommunal relations in Europe will likely be

severe. After the Madrid bombings, it is true, there was little in the way of a backlash against Spain's Muslim community. But in the Netherlands after the van Gogh murder, the story was different. Within a week, there were at least twenty reported cases of arson in the Netherlands involving Muslim schools and mosques. The sense of crisis led to the adoption of laws designed to discourage immigration and provide police with the tools they needed. Immigrants can no longer get automatic citizenship for wives they bring to the Netherlands, and citizenship now requires a working knowledge of the Dutch language. Police will be able to detain suspects longer and charge them with conspiracy. After the London bombings, half a dozen more arson attacks were reported, though there was no serious damage.

It is impossible to say how far the radicalization will go or how many young men — and perhaps soon women — are on the road to violence. Olivier Roy, the French scholar who has done more than anyone to describe the globalization of Islam, maintains that the jihadist phenomenon will be contained by Muslim communities because they recognize it as a danger to their well being. If that means that jihadists are not likely to be the dominant element in Muslim society, the prediction is probably correct — the numbers of radicals willing to commit violence is low. But we should not commit the fallacy of numbers. Relatively small increases in the number of terrorists can make a staggering difference in the dimensions of the threat in an era when explosives are widely available or easily produced and more dangerous technologies are becoming rapidly accessible.

"Islam has bloody borders," Samuel Huntington wrote famously in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* In light of the evidence of Madrid, Amsterdam, and London, the bloodiness may not be confined to the borders — it is now in the heart of the West. The challenge this will pose for a continent that has struggled over half a century to build for its citizens a "paradise," as Robert Kagan half-ironically put it, will likely be as great as any Europe will face in the coming century. How well it fares could have serious consequences for the United States. A Europe distracted by intercommunal tensions and violence will make a poor partner for America in many kinds of undertakings — not least dealing with the global threat of radical Islam. A Europe incapable of controlling the terrorists within its borders will pose a security challenge of profound proportions.

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The Long War of the 21st Century: One Ideological Campaign

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Terminological confusion bedevils analysis of this war in which we find ourselves. Are we at war with terrorism? With State Sponsors of the same? With Salafis? With Fundamentalists? With Wahhabis? Is it a War at all? If so, Number III or IV? A Really Big Law Enforcement Effort, perhaps? Nothing, at least nothing brief, seems quite to fit, and the linguistic confusion derives from real disputes about what we should be doing.

In the summer of 2005 some in the administration reportedly began to sour on the term "Global War on Terror," ("GWOT") apparently because it sounded too military. But the more basic problem is the term "terror." It is a term at once over- and under-inclusive, and it is a tactic (an awful one, but still a tactic), not an enemy. Although we strongly disapprove of Basque and Tamil terrorists, and will assist those whom they attack, we are not really at war with them ourselves. And even had the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor used Kamikazes we would still most likely not have decided to refer to World War II in the Pacific as the "GWOK" (Global War On Kamikazeism).

We are less at war with the tactic of terrorism than we are, as in World War II, with three totalitarian movements, these all rooted in the Middle East: the Baathists (essentially an Arab nationalist variety of fascists); the Shiite Islamist Jihadis (the Vilayat-i Faqih in Tehran and its instrumentalities such as Hezbollah); and the Sunni Islamist Jihadis (al Qaeda and like-minded groups). One reasonable way to describe our conflict with these three movements is "The Long War of the 21st Century," borrowing from Phillip Bobbitt. In this war there are many current and potential campaigns — from reducing our dependence on oil to penetrating Hezbollah cells in the tri-border region of South America. But one of the most difficult campaigns

> **One of the most difficult campaigns will be our effort to understand and deal with the ideology of our enemies.**

will be our effort to understand and deal with the ideology of our enemies and potential enemies, especially those in the Sunni Islamist Jihadi movement and those who support it.

To be sure the other two totalitarian movements are serious foes. The Baathists control parts of the Sunni triangle in Iraq and the government of Syria. The Shiite Islamist Jihadis control the instruments of power of Iran and possess substantial oil revenues, a nuclear weapons program, and a major terrorist asset — Hezbollah. Nonetheless it is both important and gratifying that both the Baathist and Shiite Islamist Jihadi ideologies are dead or dying. Baathism is now nothing more than what communism became in the latter part of the Cold War — a paper-thin excuse

for thugs to claim they have a right to live, as Orwell put it, with a boot in others' faces forever. And as Bernard Lewis describes, Iran is probably the only country in the Middle East where the United States is generally quite popular — the reason being that it is not only the students, women, and reformers who on the whole reject the Vilayat-i Faqih, but also a large number of Iranian clerics, since the current Iranian theocracy not only governs the able Iranian people obscenely but is solidly outside what was the main-line Shiite religious tradition prior to Khomeini's 1979 revolution: Quietism — the tradition represented by Ayatollah Sistani in Iraq.

The ideology of Sunni Islamist Jihadism is sadly, however, neither dead nor dying. The reasons are twofold.

This movement is appropriately termed "Salafist" because it seeks to return to imagined ancient ways and it thus rejects some 13 centuries of Islam's adaptation to changing times. This adaptation by Islam was so successful in some periods of history that Islamic societies led the world in science, mathematics, and learning. The Sunni Islamist Jihadis reject all of this distinguished tradition, save only that of the caliphate — the union of mosque and state in the person of the Sunni Caliph. But in this important respect they can claim to be following Sunni tradition. They call for the caliphate, however, in a worldwide totalitarian theocratic form and seek to bring it about through offensive jihad.

Second, the resources available to spread the views of the Sunni Islamist Jihadis are huge. Most estimates deriving from Saudi government figures from the late 70's and early 80's suggest that something over $75 billion has been given, via Wahhabi institutions in Saudi Arabia over the last 25 years, to promote the teachings of the Wahhabi sect — in the madrassas of Pakistan, the textbooks of Turkish children living in Germany, and the mosques of North America. This doesn't even count "charitable" giving by wealthy individuals in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. The Wahhabis and their supporters thus spend on the order of three to four times the roughly $1 billion annually that the Soviets, at their peak, spent on active measures such as terrorism, propaganda, and the like.

> **There is substantial overlap between much of the ideology imposed by the Wahhabis and that of the Sunni Islamist Jihadis — the only major issue on which they disagree being whether to maintain an alliance with the Saudi royal family.**

The central problem we face is that there is a very substantial overlap between much of the ideology imposed by the Wahhabis and that of the Sunni Islamist Jihadis — the only major issue on which they disagree being whether to maintain an alliance with the Saudi royal family. Although this is an important difference, it is in a sense a tactical dispute, a bit akin to the split between the Stalinists and the Trotskyites in the first half of the last century. Both Wahhabis and Sunni Islamist Jihadis hate moderate Muslims, such as Sufis, with a totalitarian commitment of the sort perhaps best chronicled in Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia.* The only question is whether to defeat moderate Muslims and their natural allies in the West by a permanent revolution or by subordinating everything to the interests of a single state. But then or now there is no question for totalitarians that moderates within their own movement (e.g. Social Democrats, non-Wahhabi Muslims) and their liberal friends

are the major long-term enemy, even though schisms among the totalitarians (Stalinists vs. Trotskyites, Wahhabis vs. al Qaeda) can definitely become bloody as well.

On the subject of fanatical hatred of Sufis, Shia, Jews, Christians, and democracy — and brutal suppression of women — the Wahhabis and al Qaeda are in essential agreement. The Wahhabis do not stop short of advocating genocide against some of these groups. For example the BBC reported on July 18, 2005 that a publication given to foreign workers in Saudi Arabia by the Islamic Cultural Center, falling under the authority of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, advocates the killing of "refusers" (Shia). The Imam of Al-Haram in Mecca, which is Islam's most holy mosque, Sheikh Abd Al-Rahman Al-Sudayyis, was barred from Canada in 2004 after reports of his sermons calling Jews "the scum of the earth" and "monkeys and pigs" who should be "annihilated." Materials distributed by the Saudi government to the Al-Farouq Masjid mosque in Brooklyn, as printed by Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom (*Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Invade American Mosques: 2005*), call for the killing of homosexuals: "It would be lawful for Muslims to spill his blood." Converts from Islam to another religion "should be killed" state these same Saudi publications, disseminated in U.S. mosques.

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Thus Wahhabi intolerance of other groups goes well beyond that of virtually any other contemporary religious sect. By advocating the murder of those in other groups not for individual acts but for group membership itself, the Wahhabis effectively call for genocide. Nor do these calls represent only occasional comments by fringe individuals — they are systematically promulgated by leading religious figures in the Kingdom and in some cases are printed and disseminated by the Saudi government.

A second area in which Wahhabism is totalitarian to a unique degree is in its repression of women. In 2004 the world press carried stories of religious police forcing young girls fleeing a burning school back inside to their deaths because they were not properly veiled. This is fanaticism that knows no bounds. In addition, the Saudi Kingdom was added in 2005 to the State Department's list of nations that may be subject to sanctions because they permit human trafficking, described by the Department as modern-day slavery. Eighty percent of the approximately 700,000 people trafficked annually across international borders are female and half are children. Given the numerous other examples of Wahhabi misogyny, this acceptance of the trafficking of, principally, women and girls demonstrates beyond any reasonable doubt the presence of a totalitarian mind-set targeted at half of humanity.

These manifestations of the totalitarian character of Wahhabism help explain the link between it and terrorism. In November of 2004, 26 Wahhabi clerics published a call for jihad against the U.S. in Iraq. Because of the high religious status of the clerics — most were lecturers of Islamic studies at various government-supported universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia — the exhortation to jihad was widely interpreted as a *fatwa*, a religious ruling. Several Saudi suicide bombers and other terrorists captured in Iraq have indicated that it was the fatwa by the 26 clerics that had

turned them to terrorism. For example in late March of 2005, the Iraqi TV channel Al-Iraqiya aired an interview with a Saudi terrorist captured in Iraq, Abd Al-Rahim bin Muhammad bin Abdallah al-Muteiri. He said, "I hadn't thought of coming to Iraq, but I had *fatwas* . . . I read the communiqué of the 26 clerics … ." To its credit the Saudi press published articles on both sides of this issue, as did the Arabic-language press around the world. During the battle for Falluja in 2004 Saudi Sheikh Abd Al-Muhsin Al-Abikan, for example, said to the London daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, "What is happening in Falluja is the result of such *fatwas* … [The resistance] is bringing about tragedy and destruction for Iraq, Falluja, and their residents." As of the spring of 2005 it appeared that well over half of foreign terrorists who died in suicide attacks or were killed or captured in Iraq were Saudi. In a comment to the press in late 2004 Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del) summed the situation up as follows:

> *It's a little bit like having a gas station at the corner. You don't like the proprietor very much, but he keeps pumping the gas. And now you find out in the backroom they're cutting heroin and cocaine and they're distributing it to all the drug dealers in the region. Obviously that gas station now becomes your problem.*

Following the controversy over the 26 clerics' edict the Saudi government issued a condemnation of it. But the only two Saudi officials who released the condemnation publicly were two Saudi Ambassadors, those to the United States and the United Kingdom. And the condemnations were only released in English.

Overbalancing such "retractions" of Wahhabi statements is the fact that Saudi education is turning toward, not away from, Wahhabi influence. In February of 2005 a secularist reformer, Muhammad Ahmad al-Rashid, who headed the Saudi Education Ministry and was beginning to respond to internal criticism of curricula that incited hatred of non-Muslims and non-Wahhabi Muslims, was replaced by Abdullah bin Saleh al-Obaid, a hard-core Wahhabi. Controlling 27 percent of the national budget, al-Obaid will have a substantial effect on the views of the next generation of Saudis. His views are illuminated by aspects of his background. From 1995 to 2002, al-Obaid headed the Muslim World League (MWL). According to the U.S. Treasury the MWL's Peshawar office was led by Wael Jalaidan, "one of the founders of al Qaeda." Moreover, the main arm of the MWL is the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). The Egyptian magazine, Rose al-Youssef, described the IIRO as "firmly entrenched with Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda organization." In March 2002 the U.S. headquarters of both organizations was raided and closed by federal authorities. One of the officers of the closed branch in Herndon, Virginia, was al-Obaid.

We have seen a number of manifestations of Wahhabi efforts in the United States in addition to the above: Wahhabi imams recommended by the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) in the American military and American prisons; efforts to infiltrate Arabic translators into U.S. government agencies; the now-famous escapades of the two high-flyers Abdurahman Alamoudi, founder of the American Muslim Council (AMC), now in prison as a confessed planner of terrorism, and Sami al-Arian, awaiting trial and accused of leading the U.S. operations of Palestinian Islamic Jihad; Sgt. Hasan Akbar, awaiting trial on murder charges for fragging and killing fellow soldiers in Kuwait. And so on.

Except for the fact that so much of the world's oil lies beneath Saudi Arabia we would never have been so permissive, especially after 9/11, with respect to any other nation's ideological infrastructure behaving in this country as the Wahhabis do. To continue to let it go unchecked is foolish in the extreme. In addition to other obvious steps — exerting maximum effort both to reduce our

reliance on oil and to help democracy and the rule of law prevail in Iraq — there are steps we can take both here and abroad.

We should not be intimidated by the fact that Wahhabis claim to represent a religion (even, as they do, claiming to represent "True Islam") and conclude that on First Amendment grounds we cannot deal with them. As Justice Jackson once wrote, "The Constitution is not a suicide pact," and in times of war or crisis the Supreme Court has historically permitted even very stringent security steps if the Executive Branch and Congress act together — less so if the Executive acts alone. There are a number of groups who claim to be religions that we do not let run free despite First Amendment considerations. One example is "Christian Identity," a group in this country which seeks to bring about Armageddon between Aryans (whom it believes were alone sired by Adam) and everyone else (whom it believes were sired by Satan).

A more substantial historical parallel to Wahhabi beliefs and behavior is provided by the Spanish Inquisition. Try a thought-experiment: assume that today's Spain comes under the rule of a contemporary Ferdinand and Isabella, closely linked with a 21st century Torquemada and Spanish Inquisition, and that it is substantially enriched by the discovery within its territory of 25 percent of the world's oil. Assume further that the Inquisition is

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provided by the Kingdom with $3 to $4 billion annually to promote its world-wide expansion, including the use of the auto-da-fe against heretics. Would we interpret the U.S. Constitution in such a way as to deny ourselves the right to combat this movement? Would we say, "Well, that darned Torquemada seems to keep burning a lot of Jews, Muslims, and dissident Christians at the stake, and keeps propagandizing for that here in the United States. That seems to be a pretty far cry from following the Sermon on the Mount, but he says he represents 'True Christianity' so I guess there's nothing we can do."?

We are under no obligation to acknowledge the Wahhabis' claims to represent the great and just religion of Islam, and it is absurd to do so to the degree that we may not defend ourselves against their totalitarian methods. Many hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world are fair and reasonable people, do not condemn members of other religions and other Muslims to becoming the objects of genocidal fury, do not treat women abominably (Turkey, Indonesia, and Bangladesh have all had women lead their nations' governments), and are appalled at what both the Wahhabis and the Sunni Islamist Jihadis believe and practice. They deserve and need our help, and it is very much in our interest as well to provide it, in appropriate ways, and with a sensitivity to both their religious beliefs and their cultures.

But not only do the Wahhabis not deserve to be dealt with sensitively, we should be quite candid with them. They are the implacable enemies of other Muslims, of other religions, and of freedom itself; they are endorsers of genocide; and they are the world's worst oppressors of women. Success in any contest must begin with clarity. We should frankly acknowledge that we are the Wahhabis' implacable enemy as well. At the very least we should not add to their status in their

efforts to undermine moderate Muslims. For example, when a new Under Secretary of State wants to reach out to moderate Muslims, as occurred in the summer of 2005, she should pick some group other than the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the principal apologist for the Wahhabi propaganda that is invading American mosques over the objections of moderate American Muslims. This would be the rough equivalent of the State Department deciding, early in the Cold War, that it needed to reach out to the American legal commuunity and picking the Lawyer's Guild as its partner.

Acknowledging that we are the Wahhabis' enemy suggests several principles to keep in mind while assessing steps we might take, both at home and abroad:

1. <u>We should note, and take advantage of the fact, that even though the alliance between the House of Saud and the Wahhabis is of nearly three centuries' duration, it has not always been marked by comity.</u>

   We should do what we can to help Saudi reformers – occasionally some serve in the government, a few are in the press – and the many Saudis who would quietly prefer to be able to follow other forms of Islam than Wahhabism and live under a less oppressive regime. This latter certainly includes the Shia in the East and many Sunnis in the Hejaz.

2. <u>We should, wherever practical, take steps against the Wahhabis rather than the Saudi state itself.</u>

   During the last century we sometimes had cordial, or on occasion even more than cordial, relations with the USSR and the PRC, even though we continually took substantial steps to check the activities of their communist parties, including especially their propaganda and the KGB's active measures, wherever and whenever we could. In dealing with each country we followed a variety of practical policies depending on the circumstances. We allied closely with Stalin in WWII. We cooperated extensively with the PRC against the USSR in the late 1970s and 1980s, especially regarding intelligence. Even during periods of tension there were arms control negotiations, commercial interaction (Pepsico comes to mind), and other cooperative steps. With some leaders (Kosygin, certainly Gorbachev) we had closer relations than we did with others (Andropov). In short, we fought the Cold War, but we were not on a Western version of jihad. The same should be the case for our relations with the Saudis – when we can cooperate usefully with Saudi leaders and the Saudi state we should. But the gloves should be off when we are dealing with the agents of the totalitarian ideology of Wahhabism.

3. <u>Our first and major objective should be to shut down the flow of funds to the Sunni Islamist Jihadis.</u>

   However cooperative the Saudis have been since the terrorist attacks in May 2003 in Riyadh by working with us to stop terrorists who might attack within Saudi Arabia, their record of restricting financial flow to terrorist groups beyond their borders is abysmal. In July 2005 testimony before the Senate Banking Committee, Stuart Levey, in charge of the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence in the Treasury Department, said that "Even today, we believe that Saudi donors may still be a significant source of terrorist financing, including for the insurgency in Iraq." We should essentially regard this flow of funds the way we would have regarded KGB funding of Baader-Meinhof and other terrorist groups. We should recognize no limits other than the U.S. Constitution and U.S. law in using all tools at our disposal, overt and covert, to cause maximum pain and difficulty to all who facilitate this flow, directly or indirectly.

4. <u>Inside the United States we should treat Wahhabi or Wahhabi-connected organizations in a manner similar to that in which we treated communist and communist-connected ones during the Cold War.</u>

    The U.S. government was barred by the Supreme Court in the early days of the Cold War from making communism illegal, so Congress moved instead in a number of ways — upheld by the Supreme Court — to make the lives of those in the US who were communists or affiliated with them, in a word, miserable. Registration requirements, FBI infiltration, audits, a number of tools were utilized. Dusting off some of these would be a good place to start with the Wahhabis and Wahhabi-supporting front organizations.

5. <u>By the same token, we should befriend, support, and do everything possible to assist the efforts by Muslims in the U.S. to be free of Wahhabi influence.</u>

    Most American Muslims are from South Asia (and most Arab-Americans are Christians), thus Wahhabi fanaticism doesn't take root easily in the United States. There are a number of groups and individuals that have a very different view from the Wahhabis but they are often intimidated and almost always out-spent by Wahhabi-supporting organizations. Sometimes this is ridiculously abetted by the U.S. government, for example by giving organizations such as ISNA the right to recommend Muslim chaplains for the military. If moderate Muslim groups that oppose the Wahhabis, e.g., Sufi ones, were so favored we would be helping friends instead of enemies.

6. <u>An uncompromising approach to Wahhabis and their instrumentalities in this country will both make it less likely that we will suffer serious losses and will also make it less likely that fear-driven backlash will occur.</u>

    To take one hypothetical, if we fail to investigate vigorously applicants to serve as Arabic-language translators in sensitive U.S. government agencies, and we thus fail to turn up the Wahhabi ties of a translator who is hired, that translator could easily be responsible for major failings of intelligence or law enforcement. Should the cause of such a failing come to light, e.g. in the context of an investigation after a successful terrorist attack, a major backlash against the hiring of some ethnic and religious groups, or worse, could occur. In 1942 this country locked up 125,000 Japanese Americans because of their ethnic identities, not because of any crime they had committed. Fear was a major component of that terrible decision. All who would like to reduce the probability that public fear in the future could lead to draconian and even unconstitutional steps should support actions today to reduce the chance that Wahhabi successes here or abroad could contribute to giving rise to such public fears.

> **All who would like to reduce the probability that public fear in the future could lead to draconian and even unconstitutional steps should support actions today to reduce the chance that Wahhabi successes here or abroad could contribute to giving rise to such public fears.**

7. <u>We should not be trying to win hearts and minds but to free them.</u>

We should avoid having this campaign on one of the ideological fronts in this century's Long War become one of "Western" values versus Wahhabism/Islamism. This characterization plays into the hands of those who exploit the frustration felt by many in the Arab and Muslim worlds with various aspects of Western culture — the dog-eat-dog character of the marketplace, the sexuality of music videos, etc. It also neglects the extensive roots of democracy in a wide range of non-Western civilizations — the traditions of "public reason" brilliantly set out by Nobel Laureate Armatya Sen. With respect to any program of public diplomacy we should not be trying to sell the West, much less "brand" ourselves, and rather follow the lead of the original Radio Free Europe and enable reformers and anti-totalitarians in the Muslim world to get their message across, not ours. Radio Free Europe was so successful precisely because it was not pro-American propaganda (much less an attempt at branding) but rather carried programming put together by Eastern European émigrés and dissidents to reflect what would be carried on a free station in Poland/Hungary/Czechoslovakia. The most effective case of such programming in the Middle East today would be that of a free media in a free Iraq. There could be almost nothing that would be more devastating on a daily basis to the Wahhabi worldview than broadcasts revealing accurately the vibrant freedom of an Arab democracy next door, which is one major reason we are seeing Wahhabi fatwas that try to generate terrorism in order to strangle such democracy in its crib.

> **We should not be trying to sell the West, much less "brand" ourselves, and rather follow the lead of the original Radio Free Europe and enable reformers and anti-totalitarians in the Muslim world to get their message across, not ours.**

In sum, there is no good reason, of law or policy, to permit a totalitarian ideology which undergirds those who would destroy us to be as free to operate here or abroad as the Wahhabis are today. In constraining the Wahhabis' actions in the war against us we need recognize no limits other than our Constitution and laws. This is both the most likely path toward eventual victory, and it is also the one that will be most likely to help us avoid being drawn toward unconstitutional or unwise actions. Above all we must remember that the objective should not be to sell ourselves to the Muslim world but rather to undermine totalitarianism in order to enable freedom to emerge from cultures in that world in forms of their own stamp and their own choosing.

Developments in the Muslim World and Their Impact on Radicalization

Bob Dylan Meets Hosni Mubarak:
The Times They Are A' Changing

Richard N. Haass
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A snapshot of the Arab world supports the thesis that something is afoot. In less than four years, we have seen elections in Algeria certified by the EU as free and fair; a return to constitutional rule and the reconvening of parliament in Bahrain; amendment of the constitution in Egypt (Article 76) that paved the way for Egypt's September 2005 multiple candidate presidential election; elections and a constitutional process in Iraq; relatively fair elections in Lebanon; a Libya that has abandoned WMD programs and is opening up to the West; continued political and especially economic liberalization in Jordan and Morocco; Palestinian elections; a new Qatari constitution that establishes a national assembly, two-thirds of which is elected; municipal elections in Saudi Arabia; elections in Yemen.

The question naturally arises: Why now? The Arab world had largely missed out on the major democratic waves of modern times that have transformed much of Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and parts of Africa and the former Soviet Union. There is no single reason that reform is now in the air in the Middle East but rather several explanations, reflecting regional, i.e., common factors as well as local ones. Arab media, above all television, is making a big impact with the images of elections, not just in the Arab world (Iraqis and Palestinians) but beyond, including Afghanistan and Ukraine, where the Orange Revolution (and pictures of large numbers of men and women publicly resisting state attempts to rig electoral outcomes) met with considerable popular resonance.

But there are local reasons as well. Palestinian elections had the effect they had because of the death of Yasir Arafat; for the first time, the vote clearly mattered and had the potential to make a significant difference. Change has come to Lebanon because of the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri and the widely held view of Syrian complicity that led to a manifestation of "people power" that pushed the Syrian military out. Also significant were the three Arab human development reports. With their often unsparing portrayal of relative Arab backwardness in virtually every measure of educational quality, economic achievement, political participation, and quality of life, these reports have been both a cause and a reflection of the new intellectual and political atmosphere.

Outside forces have contributed significantly in several ways. One is physical. Elections never would have come to Iraq absent the U.S.-led war and occupation. Proximity to democratic Israel (and the presence of Israeli security forces) created a context that made Palestinian elections more likely and more free. (More than one Arab observer has wryly noted to me the irony that the two

Arab societies that are currently the most open, Iraq and Palestine, are under U.S. and Israeli occupation respectively.) U.S. policy — above all, what President Bush and Secretary of State Rice have said and are saying publicly — may be the most important outside influence. American rhetoric has put pressure on governments to reform and to heed at least some of the demands of those clamoring for change.

All of these factors and forces have combined to create some momentum for additional change. The pattern seems to be that external pressure creates space for internal forces that oppose the current government and/or system to gain traction. Also, there is an interesting dynamic, in that local leaders want to be perceived as reformers both by their own citizens as well as by the external world. Although we are still operating in what might be described as the early days of a reform era, the idea of political reform appears to be taking hold.

This is not to suggest that American pressure is universally welcome. Although opponents of the status quo welcome outside involvement (at least for now), government officials are to varying extent resentful of it, often seeing it as naïve and ill-advised. "Be careful what you wish for" and "Do you really want us to go the way of Algeria or Iran?" are common refrains in Cairo and other capitals.

Despite these concerns, the case for promoting democratic reform is a strong one. It is based in part on principle, the notion that democracy (and individual liberty) is inherently better. But it is also based on two beliefs: that democratic regimes are less likely to wage war (and in general make for better international citizens) than non-democracies, and that democratic societies are less likely to produce alienated young men and women who are easily radicalized and turned into terrorists.

Both beliefs (or theories) warrant some caution, however. The democratic peace may hold for mature democracies, but it decidedly does not hold for immature or quasi-democracies, which to the contrary are easily captured by nationalist or other populist sentiments. Anyone doubting this need only reflect for a moment on recent events in the former Yugoslavia.

Second, the tie between democracy and terrorism is not quite as direct as is often asserted. Meetings of groups such as this in Aspen decades ago used to include admonitions not to expect too much from arms control. Today, we would be wise not to expect too much of democracy. A democratic Middle East would not be a terrorist-free Middle East. The sort of messianic, "right the wrongs of history" agenda articulated by al Qaeda will not be satisfied by democracy. Those individuals who carried out the 2005 London bombings lived in a democracy. Palestinians who refuse to accept a two-state solution will continue to carry out terrorism even if diplomacy succeeds in "resolving" the decades-old conflict. That said, there is the possibility (as yet unproven) that a more open region, one that offered greater opportunities for political participation and economic advancement, would be one in which terrorist recruitment would be more difficult.

A democratic Middle East would not be a terrorist-free Middle East.

The corollary to this point is that those most poised to exploit political openings are groups that have long been underground and who have revolved around the mosque. Right now they are the

principal alternative to the prevailing authoritarian regimes if they fail or are pushed out. The Iran example applies here. As a result, promotion of democracy and reform offers the only real alternative to either a status quo that is both unappealing and lacks staying power and to an Islamist alternative that would be in many ways undemocratic at home and anti-American abroad.

Perspective is also called for. The many signs of reform should not be interpreted to mean that the Arab world is in an imminent, pre-democratic phase or that democracy is inevitable. For all the signs of progress noted at the outset of this paper one could also cite examples of political stagnation, of crackdowns (and, on occasion, arrests) of opposition politicians, journalists, bloggers, and human rights activists. Street demonstrations are often dealt with harshly. Certain countries (Syria, Tunisia) have little if any reform going on, while oil revenues have made it possible for wealthy countries such as Saudi Arabia to thus far postpone meaningful change.

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More broadly, Arab societies remain for the most part characterized by sclerotic, top-heavy political systems that offer little possibility for citizens to determine their own fates. Elections, while quite common as it turns out, are rarely fair — or, if they are, tend to put into place individuals with little real power. Independent organizations are difficult to establish; those that can be established often lack real independence. In many societies, the mosque (as the one institution many governments are reluctant to crack down on) has been the principal gathering point for those unhappy with some aspect of government policy. Not surprisingly, this gives religious activists disproportionate attention and influence.

These political limits are reinforced by economic and educational limitations. Many Arab countries are plagued by too much government ownership, widespread corruption, and a regulatory environment that discourages foreign investment. Even Saudi Arabia, blessed with large pools of oil and gas, is little better off, as the bulk of the population is not employed in meaningful jobs. To some extent these pervasive problems are the direct result of education systems that emphasize rote memorization of texts over encouraging inquiry and do little to equip young men, and even less young women, with the tools they need to function well in a competitive global economy.

The requirement for change is great. It may be their societies, but the reality is that what goes on inside them affects us as well as them, a reality that gives us reason to be involved. This translates into helping governments reform their education systems by introducing modern curricula and teaching methods. On the economic side, it means encouraging governments to create conditions demonstrated worldwide to support private sector activity. Politically, it argues for advocating and supporting the development of civil society and accountable government and the strengthening of more liberal and tolerant voices within Islam. It is no exaggeration to say that we need to foster a clash within a civilization if we are to avoid a clash between civilizations.

Promoting reform from the outside must always be handled with sensitivity and perspective. There are important "do's" and "don'ts" alike. Neither the United States nor anyone else should insist on any single or particular model of democracy or market. Anything that succeeds must take root in local societies and traditions. Promoting reform is something outsiders must do *with* local governments, organizations, and people, not *to* them. This is critical, because the United States has

to maintain good working relations with the same leaders and governments it seeks to change. Promoting political and economic reform is certainly important, but so, too, is sustaining cooperation with existing governments on matters relating to terrorism, energy, and efforts to broker peace between Israel and Palestinians.

Reform will not come overnight, and we should not require that it do so. Working out "roadmaps" (what the recent task force sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations terms "pathways") with governments on timetables for the introduction of specific changes would be advisable. The time horizon is more likely to be decades than years. Actually, proceeding slowly is the only smart way to proceed given that any rush to reform would benefit those groups who have been organizing underground for years, i.e., Islamists, whose commitment to open societies is in doubt. The goal should be to buy time for liberal (in the classic sense) groups and attitudes to gain strength.

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One controversial question is what individuals and groups ought to be excluded from political processes and from direct engagement with the United States. Here the rule should be one defined by a commitment — verbal as well as in deed — to non-violence. This will be resisted by governments such as Egypt's who ban the Muslim Brotherhood, but nevertheless engaging such groups is a correct policy so long as they agree to play by the rules. To exclude them would invite violence, turn them into political martyrs, or both. The corollary to all this is that complete disarmament of groups such as Hamas, however desirable, is not something that should be required as a prerequisite for initial political participation lest the process of transforming terrorists into something else never get under way.

Political and economic reform tend to be mutually reinforcing in that the elements required in a modern economy — the rule of law, transparency, room for individual initiative — are exactly the same things that a modern democracy requires. The same can be said for education reform and its ties to political and economic change: An informed and skilled populace is essential for both a working democracy and economic success. But introducing political and economic change in tandem can at times prove impossible, largely because of the government. When this is the case, emphasizing economic measures early on makes the most sense. Often, such changes are accepted by regimes that understand the need for improved economic performance yet resist political reform for fear of relinquishing power. Over time, however, economic reform is likely to help the emergence of a middle class, historically often associated with demands for political change. In addition, the potential for economic reform to stimulate desired political change can increase if economic assistance is linked to certain conditions (accountability, rule of law, anti-corruption, etc) that make sense on economic and political grounds alike.

One aspect of political reform, that of elections, merits special attention. Too often many observers equate democracy and elections. This is not the case. What makes a country truly democratic is that power is distributed — within the government so that no individual can rule without constraint, and between government and society, so that government cannot dictate all that goes on. It is important that the judiciary, the legislature, the media, political parties, corporations, unions, and civic groups enjoy true independence. Such checks and balances are essential; consti-

tutions must be the foundation of political reform efforts. To have elections without such controls means that the election itself is likely to be flawed and that whoever wins will have too much power concentrated in his or her hands. (This was the concern after Algeria's election 15 years ago.) "One man, one vote, one time" is something to be avoided. The United States has little to fear from elections, even elections that result in the coming to power of some

As a rule, "electocracy" should not be confused with democracy.

anti-American party or person, so long as that power is limited and an opposition will have a fair chance of replacing it one day. As a rule, "electocracy" should not be confused with democracy.

The United States can do much to assist and promote reform efforts. The perceived success and attractiveness of American society is one thing. (This is where images of Hurricane Katrina's immediate aftermath may well have set back U.S. ability to promote such change.) Public statements and private advice from U.S. officials can create support for change and help launch debates. Economic resources can empower civil society. Economic aid should be used as an incentive, not a sanction, with additional amounts made conditional on implementation of specified reforms or targeted on specified uses. Exchanges that bring students and young professionals to the United States can introduce new ideas and provide valuable experience. Teacher and language training, translation of texts, the adoption of modern curricula — all can improve the quality of education. Radios, television, and the Internet can be used to broadcast messages and information that otherwise would not reach people who, in the absence of such material, are dependent on official sources of information and the mosque. Rhetorical and financial support for activities that bolster the place of women is essential; no society can flourish that denies itself the talents of half its people. Access of girls to education and of women to resources to start businesses has been shown to be critical to the prospects of entire societies.

There is no reason for the U.S. government to undertake these tasks alone. Other governments, in particular those of the EU, have an important role to play, as do the international financial institutions and the UN. Corporations should be encouraged to develop codes to guide their involvement in the Arab world akin to what was done to promote reform in South Africa, Northern Ireland, and Central America. Foundations, NGOs, and universities also can contribute to the development of civil society.

The relationship of Iraq to democratic prospects is complex. Constitutional and political progress in Iraq will add momentum to the reform effort throughout the region, while continuing disorder in Iraq would likely be a setback. An outcome there that empowered the Shia plurality to the detriment of Sunnis or that resulted in an overtly Islamic society could also complicate reform prospects elsewhere. A more obvious point would be that U.S. policy toward Iraq and the use of military force is not a model or template for democratization. War and occupation are simply too costly in every sense and the prospects too uncertain to justify such an approach.

Democracy promotion intersects the Israeli-Palestinian (or peace process) issue in a number of ways. To begin with, the ability of the United States to be an effective voice for reform will be affected by how the United States is perceived in the region, and nothing will affect views of the United States more than how it is judged to be promoting a fair settlement of the Palestinian issue. In addition, a region at peace will be better able to focus on issues of reform that have long been shelved. The United States also has to realize that those who come to power are unlikely to be pro-

American or prepared to make peace with Israel on terms that are remotely realistic. This is a price worth paying — or rather a price that cannot avoid being paid if it is judged that democratic promotion is a must.

At the same time, democracy can also be something of an obstacle to peace if it becomes a prerequisite. "Israel must link its concessions to the degree of openness, transparency, and liberalization of its neighbors." This is what is advocated by Natan Sharansky (the former Soviet dissident who is now a member of Israel's parliament) and supported at least to some degree by the Bush administration. A democratic Palestine is certainly desirable, but it should not be viewed as essential. Requiring that Palestine be democratic would put off any peace negotiation for years, which would only fuel radicalism and violence. History also shows that democracy is not essential for avoiding war. Israel has had peaceful relations with non-democratic Egypt and Jordan for decades, and the United States, which avoided war with the Soviet Union for most of the twentieth century, now has often cooperative ties with China and Russia, neither of which can be described as democratic. What should matter most is not the character of the future government of Palestine so much as its willingness and ability to sign a peace treaty with Israel and live up to its obligations.

There is one other point that is merits mention. It is impossible to predict with any confidence what the Middle East will look like in 10 or 20 years or to what extent democracy will be the norm. But a strong case can be made that the status quo is unlikely to be sustainable. The region's traditional regimes are being buffeted from within and without as never before. There is some reason to believe that top-heavy regimes can survive so long as they deliver exceptional economic performance. This may work for the small countries of the Gulf, but it is unlikely to be a viable formula for either those countries not blessed with large energy reserves or for Saudi Arabia given its large and growing population.

All of which leads to a few final thoughts. Evolutionary change is needed or the risk of revolutionary change becomes real. If it is risky to change, it is risky not to. And you can't beat something with nothing. Democratization is the best available counter to the rising alternative of intolerant Islam and the failing alternative of unresponsive authoritarianism. The challenge will be to promote reform in a manner that obeys the Hippocratic Oath and avoids doing harm.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SHIA-SUNNI DIVIDE

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Developments in Iraq today are of singular importance to how the jihadi threat will unfold in the coming years. This is not only because the insurgency has become a rallying point for jihadi activism in the region, but more important because regime change in Iraq has made sectarian identity central to politics in the Middle East, and radically changed the regional context for U.S. policy. Taking stock of the risks and visible dangers but also unique opportunities that this change presents is a significant challenge facing U.S. policy in the Middle East and its response to the jihadi threat.

The pillars of U.S. strategy of containing the jihadi threat: combating terrorism, promoting democracy, bringing stability to Iraq and Afghanistan, and winning Muslim hearts and minds through public diplomacy were all originally based on assumptions about the region that have fundamentally changed since the war in Iraq. Regional politics is now shaped by two realities. First, regime change in Iraq has empowered Shias in that country, and this has in turn led to a Shia revival across the Middle East that as a cultural and political force will shape regional politics. Iraq has encouraged the region's 130 million Shias — around half of the population in the arc from Lebanon to Pakistan and 80 percent of the population of the strategically important Persian Gulf rim — to demand greater rights and representation, but also to identify themselves as members of a region-wide community that extends beyond state borders. The Shia revival has also raised Iran's status as the region's largest Shia actor.

Second, the fall from power of Sunnis in Iraq has ended their hegemonic domination of regional politics and diminished the power of Sunni regimes and ruling communities. Gone are the Saudi-Pakistani-Taliban axis and the Arab order that asserted Sunni identity across the region, containing Iran and the influence its alliance with Syria and Hezbollah.

The Shia revival has also produced a popular Sunni backlash from Syria to Yemen and Pakistan, intensified sectarian rivalries and raised the specter of broader Shia-Sunni conflict that could threaten regional stability. Sectarian violence has in the past fueled jihadi activism. Al Qaeda and the Taliban drew strength from sectarian violence in Pakistan and Afghanistan; and the same pattern is evident today in the Middle East.

Shia revival and Sunni backlash will require different responses from the United States. The Shia revival can be a positive force and also be important to containing the jihadi threat that draws on Sunni anger. The complexity of sectarian politics in the region poses a challenge to U.S. policy. It presents both new opportunities to promote U.S. interests and new dangers emanating from the jihadi threat. To deal with this challenge the United States must adopt an effective strategy that takes stock of the new regional reality as it charts the course for U.S. policies to follow. In so doing

the U.S. strategy must strike the right balance between satisfying Shia demands and placating Sunni anger, in Iraq as well as across the region. Middle East politics is no longer defined only by the Arab-Israeli conflict, but also by sectarian, ideological, and political competition between Shias and Sunnis. The jihadi threat and the range of options available to the United States for confronting it will be decided by this reality.

THE RISE OF THE SHIA AFTER IRAQ

The opening of Iraq after 2003 ended Sunni rule over Iraq, enabling the majority Shia population — estimated to be at least 60 percent of Iraq's total population and 85 percent of its Arab population — to assume power. In the region the most important outcome of the January 2005 elections was not the advent of democracy, but that Iraq — one of the three most important Arab countries — officially became the first openly Shia Arab country.

The fall of Saddam's regime opened the Shia holy cities and centers of learning, strengthening transnational Shia religious and cultural identity from Lebanon to Pakistan. The leadership of Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani in Iraq has in particular strengthened allegiance to the faith at the popular level, and helped spawn new networks of people and organizations around the authority of the clerical leadership in Najaf. This has in turn shaped attitudes towards religion, politics, and America that are new to the region.

The symbiotic relationship between Najaf and Tehran is at the heart of the Shia revival.

These changes present the United States with new opportunities. First, the response to U.S. invasion of Iraq and United States presence in the Middle East is markedly different among Shias and Sunnis. Whereas Sunnis view U.S. policies as a direct threat to existing Sunni ruling establishments Shias have benefited from changes in the regional order that has followed the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Shias have welcomed both the fall of Sunni domination and prospects for a representative government; for, they expect to have more rights and powers under the emerging order. This makes Shias more receptive to change and more likely to work with the United States.

This has reinforced positive changes in the Shia world, wherein the most interesting and thoroughgoing debate about the place of Islam in the modern world, and its relation to democracy and economic growth are taking place. Today it is not Shia seminaries that are producing jihadis, and it is not Shia websites that are fuelling recruitment for al Qaeda.

In Lebanon and Iran where the Hezbollah and the Islamic Republic dominate respectively, popular politics is far more engaged in debates with modernity and democracy than in Sunni countries. These debates are now greatly influenced by developments in Iraq where Ayatollah Sistani has put forward a new model of politics that is based on two principles: protecting Shia identity and interests, and promoting government accountability. This approach differs markedly from theocracy in Iran, the Islamic state model of Sunni fundamentalism, or Arab authoritarian governments. This reality will produce convergence of interests between the United States and the Shia communities sooner than it will between the United States and Sunni countries. U.S. policy should help expedite positive changes in the Shia countries as a part of the religion's greater regional prominence. In building a relationship with the Shia the United States must consider the following:

- Ayatollah Sistani and the Najaf establishment (something akin to the College of Cardinals) present the United States with a regionally influential institution to work with — a parallel to which does not exist in the Sunni world. That establishment will play an instrumental role in determining when and how the Shia will respond to Sunni provocations in Iraq and elsewhere.

- In the coming years Shia revival will be based on two pillars of authority: Ayatollah Sistani and the Najaf establishment, and the Iranian government. The former is now working with the United States in Iraq, but also has a close organic relationship with the latter. The anticipated rivalry between Najaf and Tehran did not materialize, and in fact the opposite is now true. Just as Shia revival has empowered Iran since 2003, Iranian influence has supported Najaf's rise to prominence. The symbiotic relationship between Najaf and Tehran is at the heart of the Shia revival. It is a relationship that is not inherently anti-American but is rather directed at buttressing Shia claim to power in the region.

- In the coming years change in U.S.-Iranian relations will depend on a breakthrough in the current stand-off over the nuclear issue. However, there is a broader regional context to the U.S.-Iran relations that goes beyond the nuclear issue, and as such has implications for U.S.'s relation with the Shia and long run interests in region.

- The only claimant to "great power" status in the Middle East today is Iran, a Shia country. This presents the United States with a challenge. It also confirms that the future center of gravity in the region will not lie with the Arab Sunni countries but with Shia ones. That center of gravity will move eastward away from Egypt and the Levant to Iran and the Persian Gulf.

- The jihadi threat is a Sunni threat. It is Sunni militancy — al Qaeda, Wahhabi and Salafi activists, and network of Muslim Brotherhood organizations from Lebanon and Syria to Jordan and Palestinian territories, Egypt and North Africa, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula as well as Europe—that poses the greatest threat to U.S. interests. Religious and political ideology among Sunnis in the Middle East, unlike among the Shia, is moving in the wrong direction, toward militancy and violence. If the Shia are emerging from their dark years of ideological posturing, revolution, and extremism, the Sunnis are only entering it.

> **It also confirms that the future center of gravity in the region will not lie with the Arab Sunni countries but with Shia ones.**

- The violent face of Sunni militancy at display in Iraq today underscores this point, and the numbers and origins of foreign fighters there are also suggestive that sectarian violence and Sunni militancy in that country is developing a regional dimension.

- The Shia revival constitutes the most powerful resistance and challenge to Sunni militancy and Jihadi activism within the region. The Shia will be important to containing Sunni militancy. Shia revival is an anti-Wahhabi and anti-jihadi force. Its objectives are served by change in the regional balance of power and democracy. In turn, democracy will unleash the full extent of Shia challenge to Sunni militancy. In confronting the jihadi threat, it is imperative that the United States "not lose the Shia," producing a larger anti-American wave in the region. U.S. response to Shia revival in Iraq and the broader region, and the future of its relations with Iran must be considered with this context in mind.

THE SPECTER OF SHIA-SUNNI CONFLICT

The anti-American insurgency in Iraq is distinctly Sunni in character — and is supported by Sunni clerics, tribes, Ba`thists, and foreign fighters — and is equally anti-American as it is anti-Shia. It is as much directed at ending the occupation as it is an incipient sectarian civil war, which is aimed at preventing a Shia consolidation of power in Baghdad. The Zarqawi network has targeted the Shia and recently formed a Sunni militia to combat the Shia Badr Brigade. A broader civil war in Iraq will directly impact U.S.'s ability to sustain its current status in Iraq and fuel a global jihadi wave. It can moreover spread to the Shia and Sunni communities elsewhere, producing cascading instances of sectarian violence from Pakistan to Lebanon. There are already troubling signs of the spread of the Zarqawi network to Jordan, the Gaza Strip, Syria and even Europe.

Lebanon and Pakistan have already witnessed Shia-Sunni conflict — and in Pakistan sectarian violence is escalating at an alarming rate fuelling jihadi activism. In the 1980s and 1990s Shia-Sunni rivalry defined regional struggles for power and shaped alliances as Saudi Arabia led the charge to cage Iran by creating a Sunni wall around the Islamic Republic, funding religious and political organizations that would strengthen Sunni identity. That policy helped produce al Qaeda. It also fuelled regional tensions, almost precipitating a war between Iran and Afghanistan in 1997 when Iran mobilized 200,000 troops to respond to a Shia lynching by the Taliban in Mazar-i Sharif. With a regional context already in place violence in Iraq will likely impact the region deeply.

The anti-American insurgency in Iraq is distinctly Sunni in character and is as much directed at ending the occupation as it is an incipient sectarian civil war, aimed at preventing a Shia consolidation of power in Baghdad.

To contain Shia-Sunni rivalry the United States must stop sectarian violence in Iraq. This will involve fighting the insurgency and looking for ways to gain Sunni support for the current political process. Containing sectarian violence will also require arriving at an understanding on the issue with other regional actors who have a stake in the outcome of Iraq's sectarian politics and will likely be drawn into a sectarian conflict in that country. In June Iran blamed Iraq's Sunni insurgents for a spate of bombings in two Iranian cities. Given the implications of Sunni militancy for Iran and Syria it is unrealistic to expect that the two countries will remain uninvolved in Iraq's Shia-Sunni rivalry or that Jordan and Saudi Arabia will not soon see supporting the Sunni resistance to the Shia government in their national interests.

SECTARIAN CONFLICT AS A REGIONAL DYNAMIC

In the coming years, the large Shia communities of Lebanon and Bahrain will draw on the example of Iraq to embrace democracy as the means of gaining greater power. Reference to the Iraq model, "one man, and one vote" is ubiquitous in Shia media and political debates. This will in turn encourage Shia minorities in Pakistan, UAE, Kuwait, or Saudi Arabia to demand greater religious and political rights. The Shia challenge will intensify and broaden the Sunni backlash—which is already unfolding in Iraq, but is also brewing in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The Sunni

anger will in turn fuel anti-Americanism, jihadi extremism, support for al Qaeda, and also violent opposition against ruling regimes.

THE SUNNI BACKLASH

Sectarian conflict in Iraq has been radicalizing Sunni politics, tying communal grievances to the jihadi cause and Salafi ideology. The insurgency draws on the Sunni anger to wage a nihilistic campaign of violence against U.S. occupation, but also to prevent the Shia consolidation of power in the belief that a hasty U.S. departure will lead to a collapse of the current government and restoration of Sunni rule.

In Iraq, as has also been the case in South Asia since the 1990s, sectarianism provides a base of support and source for recruits for jihadi groups and al Qaeda. Iraq has tied sectarianism to anti-Americanism. The Sunni domination of Islam and its prerogative to power — that was established early in Islamic history — is now in question. This has led to siege mentality among Sunni hard-liners and is animating militant forces that hold the United States responsible for fall of Sunnis from power and see developments in Iraq in apocalyptic terms. This trend is particularly evident today among militants in Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and is spreading farther to North Africa and South Asia. The Sunni backlash will cut across national boundaries, involving militant forces and Islamist parties, but also transnational tribal networks that run from Syria through Saudi Arabia.

In Saudi Arabia, which has supplied the majority of foreign fighters that have been killed in Iraq, religious and tribal ties with Iraq run deep. Wahhabi clerics denounce Shi`ism as heresy and as an American fifth column, echoing pronouncements by Iraq's pro-Saudi Council of Muslim Clerics and Abu Musab Zarqawi, and those of militant Sunni clerics in Syria, Jordan, or Pakistan and Bangladesh. Wahhabi clerics have also been instrumental in organizing networks of support and recruits for the Sunni cause in Iraq, hoping to halt and even roll-back the Shia revival before it changes Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

> **The Sunni domination of Islam and its prerogative to power — that was established early in Islamic history — is now in question.**

Sunni militancy is a destabilizing force. It will not only fuel international terrorism but also threaten U.S. allies in the region in new ways. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Saudi Arabia led the charge to defend the Sunni dominance in the region as the bulwark against the Iranian revolution. That role gave the Saudi monarchy Islamic legitimacy. The Shia revival in Iraq has damaged the monarchy's Islamic image. As Riyadh can no longer claim to be sustaining Sunni dominance, it is witnessing a decline in its religious legitimacy within the Kingdom, as well as across the region. Al Qaeda and the Iraqi insurgency now carry the mantle of the defender of Sunnism.

The Saudi monarchy today faces a powerful Sunni insurgency within its borders. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has its roots in the Afghan war and has been inspired by the example of Osama bin Laden. However, it is particularly angry at what it perceives as the House of Saud's "betrayal of Islam" in Iraq. These militants are now developing ties with Iraqi insurgency and identifying with tribal ties in place of national affiliation to reject both the Saudi regime and the

Shia dominance in Iraq.

Riyadh is also under pressure from its resurgent Shia minority to relax its restrictions on that community, to recognize their religious rights and to allow them to practice their religion in the open. The Saudi monarchy has so far cautiously yielded to Shia demands, but is under pressure to do more. This would put to question the religious legitimacy of the monarchy as the defender and propagator of Islam in the eyes of its hard-line clerics, an outcome that will weaken the Saudi monarchy. It is the Shia challenge, not al Qaeda that is the primary threat to the Saudi regime.

In May 2005 Ayatollah Sistani strongly criticized the Yemeni government for its suppression of a Shia rebellion in northwest Yemen. This was a clear warning to the Saudi regime regarding the treatment of its Shia minority and an indication that transnational Shia ties and the Najaf establishment will challenge Sunni regimes, demanding greater rights for the Shia.

The Shia constitute a majority of the oil-rich Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. They have close ties to Shias of Iraq, Kuwait, and Bahrain. The Shia have been discriminated against, but for now they want inclusion into the Saudi society and politics. This would however mean weakening the Wahhabi-Saudi compact that since 1932 has formed the religious and political structure of the Kingdom. This will also encourage other minority groups and tribes to also demand rights, which will further erode the authority of the Saudi monarchy. The Shia would benefit from political reform in the Kingdom, but changes that they will demand in an open political process will threaten the foundation of the Wahhabi state, and by implication Wahhabism itself.

In Jordan, Sunni militancy has been drawing strength from Iraq. The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood and other independent Islamist activists have had strong ties with Iraq's al-Anbar province, and are today close to Sunni clerical associations in Iraq. The presence of Jordanian fighters in Iraq, most notable among them, Abu Musab Zarqawi, and conversely Ba`thists in Jordan has further strengthened these ties. Jordanians sympathize with Iraqi Sunnis and support the cause of the insurgents. Saddam Hussein is popular with Jordan's large Palestinian population, who fondly remember his SCUD missile attack on Tel Aviv in 1990. All this poses an existential challenge to the Jordanian monarchy. Jordan has long been vulnerable to the radicalization of Palestinian politics in the West Bank; now it is vulnerable to the radicalization of Sunni politics in al-Anbar. The popularity of the insurgency threatens the monarchy. The real challenge will come when the anger over developments in Iraq turns on the monarchy in Amman.

In Syria too, aftershocks of Iraq will impact regime stability. The Syrian regime is dominated by the minority Alawi community — an off-shoot of Shi`ism — which has faced strong resistance from the country's majority Sunni population. Developments in Iraq have both fueled Sunni anger and raised Sunni expectation of empowerment. The Syrian regime will be threatened by both the example of fall of minority rule and transfer of power to the majority community in Iraq and the radicalization of that country's Sunnis.

The rising tide of Sunni radicalism is in competition with those forces that preach moderation and embracing of democracy. The pace and scope of political reform in the Arab Middle East, if it were to bring about real change and inclusion of moderate Muslim voices, can mitigate Jihadi militancy and reducing the impact of Sunni backlash on regional politics.

NEW REGIONAL ALIGNMENTS

The Shia revival in Iraq has produced the contours of a new regional alignment. The United States has not just changed the regimes of Afghanistan and Iraq, but also the regional order as a whole. The boundary lines between Arabs and non-Arabs are now blurred as one of the largest and most important Arab states has a Kurdish president and enjoys closer ties with Iran than with Saudi Arabia or Jordan; and the old Sunni hegemonic order has collapsed as Iraq has become a Shia country and jolted Shia minorities in the region into greater activism. U.S. policy has not reflected this reality and has so far sought to pursue state-building in the framework of the old regional order.

The triumphal trips of Iran's former President Khatami to Beirut shortly after the fall of Baghdad, and later, that of Iran's Foreign Minister to Baghdad, and more recently a military pact between the two countries, are suggestive of the emergence of what King Abdullah of Jordan referred to as the "Shia crescent." In the region there is talk of a Beirut-Najaf-Tehran axis, of a regional alignment that will cut across the boundaries of the Arab League, defying the Arab/non-Arab or the pro-West/anti-West divisions that have defined the region for long.

THE IRAN FACTOR

Iran's policies and regional ambitions are an important factor in the dynamic of sectarian politics and hence jihadi activism. In addition, U.S. policy toward the Shia revival and the Sunni backlash to it ultimately involves its policy toward the largest Shia country in the region, Iran — which also has close ties with powerful Shia political forces in Lebanon and Iraq, and with the economically influential Shia communities in the Persian Gulf, a notable component of which are of Iranian origin. U.S.-Iranian relations are today at a critical juncture. Although the nuclear issue dominates U.S. concern with Iran, U.S.-Iran relations have broader implications for the emerging regional order, U.S. policy toward the Shia revival, and containing sectarian rivalries and rising tide of Sunni militancy.

The Iranian revolution combined Shia identity with militant anti-Westernism, which was reflected in the hostage crisis, bombing of Marine barracks in Beirut, and support for international terrorism. However, Iranian revolution is today a spent force and the Islamic Republic a tired dictatorship, and despite the outcome of the recent presidential elections — and by some accounts because of it — continues to face pressure for change.

Iranian politics in recent years has been in the grip of an ascendant nationalism that cuts across ideological lines, and sees Iran as a regional power and the center of a Persian and Shia zone of influence stretching from Central Asia to Mesopotamia. The conservative victory in the recent presidential race has only bolstered these feelings and made the Iranian regime more convinced of the country's regional status and more confident in asserting it.

Although the Iranian population is cynical about its clerical leadership it has nevertheless embraced the Shia revival in Iraq, identifying with Shia culture and identity now represented by the Najaf establishment. The opening of Iraq has strengthened religious and economic ties between the two countries owing to the large number of Iranian pilgrims who visit and invest in the Shia holy cities of Iraq. This trend is likely to become more important as the presidential election in Iran has mobilized that segment of the population that most readily responds to Shia revival and is most sensitive to the Sunni backlash to it.

In addition, Iran has a strategic interest in Shia domination in Iraq and more generally the Shia revival. Only five years ago Iran was surrounded by hostile Sunni regimes — the Taliban-Pakistan-Saudi Arabia axis on the east, and Iraq on the west. Iranians have welcomed the collapse of the Sunni wall around them and see the Shia revival as the means for preventing its return. In fact, the collapse of Taliban and Saddam Hussein has freed Iran to expand its regional influence at a time when the country's vibrant cultural and economic scene supports greater regional expression. The Shia revival will further bolster expansion of Iran's regional influence and its claim to "great power" status. This is in turn tied to Iran's nuclear ambition — which aims to both protect and perpetuate that regional role.

> **The collapse of Taliban and Saddam Hussein has freed Iran to expand its regional influence at a time when the country's vibrant cultural and economic scene supports greater regional expression.**

In Iraq, Iran's primary objective is to ensure that Arab nationalism — that was anchored in Sunni rule — does not return to power. A number of senior Iranian leaders were born in Iraq and were expelled from that country in the 1970s as part of Saddam's Arabization campaign. These leaders view Arab nationalism as a Sunni ideology that is anti-Iranian, and see an Iraq defined by Shia identity as more friendly to Iran. The new Iranian president and the current leadership of Iran's elite military force, the Revolutionary Guard, are veterans of the Iran-Iraq war. They see pacification of Iraq under a Shia leadership as a strategic objective — what they were not able to win in the Iran-Iraq war they can now get from the Shia government in Baghdad. The Iranian public too looks to a Shia Iraq as a source of security, reflected in the oft-repeated comment, "Shia countries do not go to war with one another".

Iran therefore views empowerment of Shias from Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia in its national interest — a unique opportunity to change the balance of power in the Middle East to its advantage — and conversely sees the insurgency in Iraq or the sectarian conflict in the region as ultimately a threat to those interests. For now Iran much like the Najaf establishment sees the United States as the bulwark against Sunni militancy. However, if the United States were to cease to play that role Iran will likely become more directly involved, in particular if the insurgency were to more directly challenge Shia control of Iraq. Iranian support for an autonomous Shia region in southern Iraq must be understood in this context. In the coming years sectarian politics could play a more important role in U.S.-Iranian relations; and how those relations evolve will in turn directly impact the development of jihadi politics in the region.

Sectarian tensions in Iraq demand of the United States to prepare for different possible outcomes, and to assess the costs and benefits of each. Shia domination over Iraq is the fastest route to stability in that country. In the short run, however, that scenario will intensify the Sunni insurgency, which will inevitably spread to other countries in the region and also involve Iraq's neighbors in its civil strife. Sunni militancy in Iraq is an important driver for the global extremist trend. A successful Sunni restoration — or even a significant rolling back of gains made by the Shia, as witnessed by demands for concessions from Sunnis during the constitutional negotiations — may lead to a Shia insurgency that could be directed at the United States. That outcome can create instability in the region and ultimately a break-up of Iraq. Moreover, it is unlikely that a Sunni restoration in Iraq will end Sunni extremism.

Stability will come to Iraq only after its bitter sectarian struggle for power is settled. That struggle, regardless of its outcome, is likely to be violent and costly. The United States cannot choose for Iraq a course that would avoid that conflict; what it can do is to plan adequately for the outcome, as well as the intended and unintended consequences of the conflict. U.S. interests in the Middle East today hinge on tightly managing the impact of change in the sectarian balance of power in the region. Iraq has unleashed forces that will change the face of the region in the coming years. In this fluid period U.S. policy must be based on a cogent grand strategy that is more than the sum of single policy objectives and which reflects the changing reality of the region.

U.S. interests in the Middle East today hinge on tightly managing the impact of change in the sectarian balance of power.

Evolving Strategy and Tactics in the War on Terror: Ongoing Military, Intelligence, and Political Operations

Preparing to Fight the Global Insurgency:
Adapting U.S. Conventional Forces

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Since 1996, in response to a request from Congress, the Department of Defense has conducted a review of its forces, resources, and programs and presented its findings to the President and Congress. The last Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was completed in 2001 and another is now underway. The QDR was designed to be an unconstrained examination of what U.S. defense forces should look like. Ideally, the review should produce a picture that can inform budget and acquisition priorities as well as shape defense related decisions for decades to come. Obviously, the September 11 attacks have added urgency to the current examination of how to restructure U.S. military forces to meet future challenges. A central question for defense planners today has been how to balance the type of military forces capable not only of combating the global, radical Islamist threat but also responding to China's growing economic and military strength, and the challenges posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The current QDR examines how to organize U.S. military forces in order to respond to a range of challenges, including the use of weapons of mass destruction on U.S. and allied territories, the global insurgency fueled by Islamic fundamentalism, and the kind of warfare likely to unfold against peer competitors such as China. The focus of this paper will be on that middle arena of conflict: the challenges posed by the ongoing Islamist insurgency and the kind of warfare likely to be employed by adversaries determined to use their asymmetric advantages against the United States.

The term "global Islamist insurgency" (or "global jihadist insurgency") is a more dynamic, descriptive term than the "war on terrorism" because it defines an adversary against which the United States can focus. The global insurgency is driven by a radical Islamist ideology seeking to impose a strict version of Islam upon states throughout the world. Daniel Pipes offers a succinct and cogent description of the threat: "Islam itself — the centuries-old faith — is not the issue but one extremist variant of it is. Militant Islam derives from Islam but is a misanthropic, misogynist, triumphalist, millennarian, anti-modern, anti-Christian, anti-Semitic, terroristic, jihadistic and suicidal version of it."[1] Al Qaeda is illustrative of the movement, but it has been well-documented that it is only one group in a much broader network of jihadist groups with similar or overlapping goals. The global insurgency demands that the United States use not only its military power but also its political instruments of power because at its core an insurgency is about political and social discontent, expressed most often through violent means.

The global jihadist movement is transnational and requires a transnational response. Even if the ideological fervor of the radical Islamists subsides, future enemies are likely to take their fighting cues from jihadist tactics and operations. As Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has stated, "future dangers will less likely be from battles between great powers, and more likely from enemies that work in small cells, that are fluid and strike without warning anywhere, anytime — enemies that

have access to increasingly formidable technology and weapons."[2] Some analysts refer to this kind of war as "4th-generation warfare," in which guerillas and terrorists use asymmetric tactics to exploit the United States' vulnerabilities.

The debate over how to adapt conventional forces to perform in an "unconventional," or irregular, environment challenges prevailing ideas on irregular war that have existed since Vietnam and suggests that there are limitations to the applicability of the high-tech military transformation to this jihadist threat. Overall, the current QDR discussion suggests that the United States is faced with the requirement of implementing two simultaneous military transformations. The first revolves around the so-called revolution in military affairs. This transformation has sought to take advantage of new technologies and their ability to make the U.S. military into a lighter, more lethal, precise, and flexible force. The second transformation is largely an organizational and cultural one, focused on the problem of adapting conventional military forces so that they can prevail against the global insurgent threat and the type of warfare likely to stem from that threat. Fundamentally, the global insurgency concept being discussed by some QDR planners challenges the view that Iraq is sui generis. Rather than being unique, Iraq portends of a future of messy and violent struggles for power — conflicts which are inherently part of any war.

> **The debate over how to adapt conventional forces to perform in an "unconventional" or irregular environment challenges prevailing ideas on irregular war that have existed since Vietnam.**

The military services most directly affected by this global insurgent challenge will be the Army and Marine Corps. Ground forces will have the predominant role to play in confronting a long term global insurgency because defeating insurgent movements requires the creation of a stable political end-state, which in turn necessitates the control of territory. Most often, a sustained presence of military forces is necessary to oversee, to varying degrees, a strategy for political change. This interpretation explicitly rejects the narrower technological point of view, predominant in Air Force and Navy, which primarily sees the global war on terrorism as a high-technology intelligence and targeting challenge. While that view acknowledges that some sustained troop presence may be necessary — for instance, highly specialized reconnaissance units might identify targets and call in precise air strikes — it does not, for the most part, envision a long-term presence of U.S. ground forces in a particular country. Prevailing against the global insurgency will, however, require more than the successful targeting and hunting of terrorists.

Four tensions have surfaced in the ongoing QDR discussions over how to best adapt U.S. conventional military forces to perform more effectively against the global jihadist movement. First, some U.S. defense and military planners are rethinking the traditional divide between conventional forces and the special operations community. Since World War II, the U.S. military has consigned most activities that relate to the training of security/defense forces and the political and economic reconstruction of states to the reserves and the Special Operations community. This development occurred despite the fact that tactical troops have always worked side-by-side with more specialized units to restructure corrupt police ministries, retrain police and defense forces, organize for local elections, and ensure that new government officials were, in fact, new. During the early Cold War years, some specialized Army units were focused on nation building and the training of militaries in Latin America — but this community, too, was considered distinct from the regular, conventional

forces. This division was essentially codified after Vietnam, when, in the ensuing effort to improve U.S. counterinsurgency capabilities, a distinction between "regular war" and "the other war"[3] emerged. Eventually, this resulted in the placement of virtually all military units with knowledge about political and economic concerns, other nations' defense and security forces, language and culture, into the Special Operations Forces (SOF) community.[4] In 1987, the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) was created which provided these more specialized forces with a strong proponent within the larger military. Yet the creation of this new command meant that the problems associated with defeating an enemy politically, securing the support of local populations, and restoring political and economic order became problems for special operators, rather than regular forces.[5] Thus while some elements of SOCOM became fairly good at conducting these activities in war, the knowledge and appreciation for these components of war did not, for the most part, reach the so-called regular forces.   The current QDR examination of how to better prepare conventional forces for the global insurgency aims to reverse this trend.

Iraq has highlighted, once again, the importance of preparing conventional forces for the demands generated by the "politics of war" — those activities necessary for the restoration of security: the retraining of military and defense forces, and reestablishment of some semblance of political order. These are recurring elements of insurgent, as well as regular, warfare. While today units redeploying to Iraq are receiving training that is more focused on the operational skills needed to address conditions there, QDR planners are working to institute changes in the conventional force structure — in training, personnel procedures, and organization — which recognize that the challenges of counterinsurgency are bigger than Special Forces alone can handle. An effective response to the global jihadist insurgency requires our planners' understanding of the tactics and strategies likely to be employed by our adversaries and our military forces' readiness to respond along the spectrum of war. While Iraq and Afghanistan represent counter-insurgency battles in the wider global insurgency, aspects of operations in those countries look a great deal like "regular war" as well. Regular forces must be able to engage enemy forces kinetically, but also, train and equip indigenous security forces, secure territory and restore political order simultaneously, in order to reduce the ability of the insurgents to operate and field forces. These two broad operational challenges are strategically linked.   Key "non-combat" tasks are in fact critical to defeating an insurgency because they aim to undercut the political momentum of an insurgent movement by weakening local support for insurgents. As conventional forces become more adept in such roles, Special Forces can in turn become more focused on specialized, direct action activities.

A second tension related to preparing conventional forces to combat the global jihadist challenge revolves around the extent to which recent technological advances are relevant to the challenges of irregular war. Iraq has made clear that there is a tension between lighter, faster

> Key "non-combat" tasks are in fact critical to defeating an insurgency because they aim to undercut the political momentum of an insurgent movement by weakening local support for insurgents.

forces and the tactics of determined insurgents. Indeed, over the past few months, analysts and journalists alike have pointed to the vulnerability of lightly armored U.S. vehicles to insurgent weapons. Despite the pressures of the first transformation — that is, the move toward deploying lighter forces

rapidly into a theater — battalion commanders in Iraq today are demanding heavy armor in field, as insurgents there quickly recognized the vulnerability of lightly armored vehicles to rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) and similar devices. Thus as noted above, for all their "irregularities" counterinsurgency fighting in Iraq today presents conventional as well as unconventional challenges for U.S. troops. The Iraq experience suggests that key objectives of the first, technologically driven transformation — that of introducing lighter, more easily deployable forces, and long-range strike capability — may have limited utility for engaging in the kind of operations involved in longer term counter-insurgency operations, which require active territorial control, the training of indigenous security forces, and most significantly, the winning over of the local population.

A third tension shaping the preparation of conventional forces for the global insurgency is the problem of appropriate command arrangements in a theater of war — that is, the need for a command and control machinery that provides adequate control of a territory as major combat operations end. An adequate command arrangement will require the military to remain in control to restore territorial security and to regain the confidence of the local population. This task cannot succeed without a change in military as well as civilian attitudes. Theater commanders will need to recognize that control should remain in their hands for some time into the future. U.S. civilian leaders need to overcome their reluctance to give the military *initial* control over such non-combat tasks, many of which are fundamentally political in nature. In Iraq, full operational control of many important non-combat tasks was *not* ceded to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in mid-April 2003. The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), created before the start of hostilities in February 2003, was charged with administering the country, providing humanitarian aid, and rebuilding damaged infrastructure. ORHA's relationship to CENTCOM created dual authorities, with ORHA technically under CENTCOM's operational control, but with CENTCOM controlling critical resources (such as security), and ORHA itself charged with creating the conditions for Iraqi self-rule. This dual structure continued under the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). While the appointment of Ambassador Bremer as head of the CPA seemed to reflect an effort to improve unity of command in the theater, the CPA remained dependent on CENTCOM for many of its resources and its ability to conduct day-to-day activities. These troubling and unclear divisions of authority hampered the ability of all parties to take necessary action on the ground — an operational failure which had and continues to have strategic consequences.

Fourth, related to this tension over command and control is the need to develop an effective mechanism for employing, in a strategic and integrated fashion, non-military instruments of U.S. power. Prevailing against the global Islamist insurgency will require more than the adaptation of conventional military forces. Effectively confronting the global insurgent challenge requires a government-wide response. The challenges inherent in insurgent type warfare — which will always involve opponents who capitalize on their asymmetric strengths — are not all in the military's bailiwick. For the foreseeable future, however, the impetus for this response will remain within the U.S. military, largely because the U.S. government's only robust strategic planning capability exists in the Department of Defense. Although there have been more recent efforts to address this problem, frankly, they remain piecemeal. For example, although the new State Department Office of Stabilization and Reconstruction represents a step forward, it is still enmeshed in its own fight for bureaucratic survival within a Department still dominated by regional fiefdoms. Neither of the newer State or National Security Council efforts are deeply staffed — thus, they simply cannot compare with the military's strategic planning resources. A more robust solution in the near term might involve the "deployment" of State, USAID, and other government personnel for lengthy rotations —

of at least two years — to the planning staffs of key combatant commands.

The tensions described above — the issue of specialization, the role of new technologies in counterinsurgency warfare, the problem of command and control, and the dearth of a serious interagency planning capability — continue to shape the ongoing defense review and are evident in the discussion over the so-called "10:30:30" model. This construct, reportedly supported by Secretary Rumsfeld and other top OSD officials, asks the military services to deploy to a distant theater in 10 days, defeat an enemy within 30 days, and be ready for an additional fight elsewhere in the world within another 30 days.[6] The development of the 10:30:30 model was reportedly informed by the speed of the assault on Baghdad, with proponents arguing that the relatively speedy invasion saved U.S. lives and that an even faster force might have crushed Saddam Hussein's Baathist leaders before they disappeared, perhaps preventing the insurgency from taking hold.[7] While this model might be applicable to war against certain kinds of adversaries, detractors of the model point out that rapid large-scale fast maneuvers are unlikely to be effective against adversaries who can "melt" into towns and cities and reestablish bases of support. As one recently retired Marine colonel wrote, "Would getting to Baghdad faster — say by April 1 instead of April 9 — have made a significant difference? Our inability to finish in Iraq arises from our failure to suppress an insurgency, not our slowness in capturing the capital."[8]

Furthermore, the idea that U.S. forces would remain in a theater for only 30 days following an intervention presumes a scenario in which technological advantages at the outset of a conflict are able to decisively defeat all enemy forces and subdue the state in question. This 30 day construct challenges the view that campaigns are likely to be protracted conflicts in remote regions of the world. Moreover, it challenges the idea that central to any war — regular or irregular — is the problem of how to reconstitute political order in a state. The restoration of political order requires the control of territory, the establishment of territorial security, and some level of some level of political and military stability in a country. U.S. military forces have always and will most likely continue to play a central role in such a transition since insurgents thrive on instability and foster instability as an important operational tactic. Air and naval power alone cannot reestablish political order. And most adversaries are likely to work hard to keep the United States bogged down for more than 30 days — particularly if one believes that the jihadist movement is global in nature, with events in one state linked to insurgent aims in other states around the world.

> **For the foreseeable future, the impetus for the U.S. response to the global Islamist insurgency will remain with our military.**

U.S. defense planners face the challenge of embarking on two simultaneous transformations to meet quite different kinds of threats. One emphasizes improved power projection capabilities to deal with adversaries such as China (and possibly Iran and North Korea). The other transformation seeks to adapt an organization and a mindset so that U.S. soldiers deployed to contingencies such as Iraq will not be wondering why, "if the war is supposed to be over, we are still being shot at." The challenge today is to generate a realization in defense circles that both transformations are necessary, with the Services playing different roles depending upon the kind of conflict at hand.[9] While the Army and Marine Corps are likely to focus mainly on the global insurgent challenge — with regular forces doing more of what Special Forces have traditionally done — the Navy and Air Force are best suited to focus on classic power projection challenges against adversaries such as China. To improve the ability of U.S. conventional forces to challenge the Islamist insurgency, U.S. ground forces may have to grow. At the very least, they will need

to develop and be prepared to execute command arrangements that recognize the "irregular" aspects of the counter-insurgency and give U.S. forces control over related aspects of the war. Furthermore, it is imperative that a serious interagency response mechanism be established to allow for true integration on the ground.

The central challenge of adapting regular forces for the global insurgency is the idea that politics explicitly informs operations. The goal for the U.S. military will be to conduct military tactics and operations with this understanding in mind — with the flexibility to undercut political momentum of an insurgent movement and the understanding that how specific military tactics and operations unfold will have political repercussions in the theater. Counterinsurgency war, in particular, highlights how combat operations and non-military tasks such as preserving political security can explicitly inform each other, since they are part of the same campaign. In Iraq, stabilization measures were occurring in the defeated cities of Umm Qasr, Basra, and An Nasiriyah as the Army's 3rd Infantry Division pressed on toward Baghdad. Just as joint operations should seek a synergy among the units of different services to accomplish the objective at hand, combat and governance should be linked. Accepting this interrelationship will have specific ramifications for the combat phases of war and for how wars are planned, fought, and ultimately won.

In the end, the United States will reach this goal if military and civilian leaders recognize that the global insurgent challenge poses both conventional and "irregular challenges." The global insurgency demands an acceptance of the kinetic requirements of war — the destruction of traditional "armies" or enemy forces — and a concomitant acceptance that the human requirement of war is central for ensuring that tactics and operations avoid generating more enemies. As General Anthony Zinni remarked shortly after his retirement, "You're at the edge of the empire and you see it firsthand….you know what the requirement is. And we keep screaming back here into the system that … we need to train our officers and leaders for a different kind of mission out there."[10]

ENDNOTES

1   Daniel Pipes, "Aim the War on Terror at Militant Islam," *Los Angeles Times,* January 6, 2002.

2   Remarks prepared by for delivery by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, June 5, 2004. http://www.iiss.org/newsite/shangri-la-speeches.php?itemID=46.

3   This distinction is discussed in much of the post-Vietnam literature See Richard Hunt, The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), esp. Chapter 3; Andrew Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam, and Lewis Sorely, A Better War.

4   While some individuals such as FAOs receive language training, most of the Army's organizational units ostensibly focused on these issues — such as its civil affairs units — are not part of the regular active force.

5   Interestingly, one of the detractors at the time was then Undersecretary for Policy Fred Ikle, who argued, presciently that the creation of this special command would remove many of its activities from the general force.

6   "Rumsfeld's New Speed Goals," *Defense News,* 12 April 2004.

7   Greg Jaffe, "Battle Lines: Rumsfeld's Push for Speed Fuels Pentagon Dissent," *Wall Street Journal,* May 16, 2005, A1.

8   Ibid., A1.

9   This is a view held by individuals such as Andy Hoehn, now at RAND.

10 Address by General Anthony Zinni, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired), Naval Institute Forum 2003, Sept 4., 2003, Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA.

Unconventional Approaches to an Unconventional Threat: A Counter-Epidemic Strategy[1]

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and

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"As we continue the battle against al Qaeda, we must overcome a movement—a global movement infected by al Qaeda's radical agenda."

George J. Tenet, former Director of Central Intelligence

"The challenge of terrorism is…akin to fighting a virus in that we can accomplish a great deal but not eradicate the problem. We can take steps to prevent it, protect ourselves from it, and when an attack occurs, quarantine it, minimize the damage it inflicts, and attack it with all our power."

Richard N. Haass, former Director of Policy Planning, U.S State Department

A New Strategic Challenge

It is clear in the wake of the London bombings that we are still trying to grasp the nature of the new strategic challenge we face and how best to counter it. There is no better indication of this than the complete lack of consensus or common lexicon about what to call the threat. Is it "global terrorism," "Islamic terrorism" "al Qaeda and its affiliates," "Sunni Jihadists," "Islamist radicals" or "terrorist extremism." This is not just a semantic issue; words and names have vital operational import. Without clarity on who, precisely, is our adversary, we are unlikely to ever develop a clear and comprehensive understanding of its objectives, strategy, and operational character. And without such a common understanding, it will be difficult if not impossible to conceive of an effective, let alone collective, response. Yet, nearly four years after 9/11, it is our assessment that there is neither a broadly accepted understanding of the challenge we face nor a comprehensive long-term strategy to counter it.

Our preference is to classify this broader challenge as "Islamist militancy." Like the 9/11 Commission we feel it important to use the modifier "Islamist" — a politico-religious movement within the Muslim world — as distinct from "Islamic" — the culture and religion of Islam.[2] Unlike the 9/11 Commission, however, we prefer the simpler, less loaded term "militancy" to "terrorism."

Using the term "militants" to refer to those who either employ or espouse violent means in pursuit of political ends not only avoids the notoriously slippery definitional problems associated with terrorism but it also serves to underscore that the challenge is both multi-dimensional and more broad based than purely those who actually carry out terrorist attacks.[3] Indeed, Islamist militancy has three main constituent groups whose memberships are constantly evolving and overlap in significant ways. There are first, the transnational jihadist groups that have a global agenda (principally al Qaeda and its affiliates), second, the nationalist insurgent groups with essentially a local agenda (for example, Hamas, Hezbollah, and some of the Kashmiri groups) and third, the miscellaneous groups and networks that directly and indirectly support these organizations. Distinctions among these groups are difficult to discern. Indeed, increasingly new organizations and groups are emerging that share common traits with overlapping agendas. Figure I, below, provides a general snapshot of the principal actors in 2005. The diagram is not meant to be exhaustive, but merely illustrative of the phenomenon and its key constituent elements.

Yet, nearly four years after 9/11, it is our assessment that there is neither a broadly accepted understanding of the challenge we face nor a comprehensive long-term strategy to counter it.

FIGURE I

Islamist Militancy
(Circa 2005)

Transnational I-M Groups with Global Agenda

ASG, JeM, SJ, JTJ, AI IIB, IMU

Al-Qaeda, JI, Islamic Jihad

Saudi Charities, AQ Websites

"Independents" (e.g 3/11)

Hamas, Hizbollah HM, MILF

Al-Muhajiroun, Al Mukmin

JUI, Hiz/Hamas Party Orgs

Nat./Insurgent I-M Groups with Local Agenda

Support/Mobilization Networks

Islamist militancy does not represent a conventional national security threat — that much is clear and generally understood. The struggle we find ourselves in is neither like World War II nor the Cold War with their more or less clearly defined combatants, "front lines," and rules of engagement. Therefore, the standard toolbox of international, state-oriented security responses has limited utility.

Neither does it represent a conventional terrorist threat that typically has a distinctive, often singular, identity with reasonably clear political goals, organizational structure, and area of operations. Therefore, the key to success is usually conventional counter-terrorist responses with their emphasis on apprehending an organization's leaders and rolling up networks or cells of activists and supporters through improved intelligence gathering and sharing. In contrast, Islamist militancy represents *a transnational, highly dynamic, increasingly decentralized, religiously-inspired movement propelled by a diverse collection of non-state actors that operate clandestinely, or in some instances openly using unorthodox tactics and weapons.* The growing trend, exhibited in London, Madrid, and elsewhere, toward the emergence of localized, self-organizing militant groups largely acting independently of higher operational direction, highlights further the limits of conventional counter-terrorism responses.

Not surprisingly, an increasing number of experts now advocate drawing on the strategies and tactics of unconventional or "irregular" warfare to meet the challenge. The threat is portrayed as a global insurgency that requires a commensurate *global counter-insurgency* (COIN) campaign. There is some logic to this as elements of the challenge reflect characteristics of a classic insurgency. Certainly, al Qaeda's stated goals of expelling "Jews and crusaders" from the Muslim world and cleansing it of apostate regimes — all with the objective of reestablishing a purified Caliphate, can be viewed as an insurgency of sorts. The recognition that success ultimately hinges on winning "hearts and minds" in the Muslim world is also a critically important attribute of a counter-insurgency response.

Yet, just as classic counter-terrorism measures have their limits, so a strictly counter-insurgency approach has its shortcomings and even liabilities. Describing the phenomenon as a global insurgency dangerously exaggerates the threat by assuming a degree of organization and unity among its various actors that currently does not exist. The COIN approach also risks conflating many kinds of Islamist struggles and perversely even serving to legitimize them. Unless suitably adapted, the standard COIN framework with its simplistic distinctions between "enemies," "friends," and "uncommitted" could make matters worse especially if military or "kinetic" responses come to dominate.

> **Social scientists increasingly have looked to epidemiology to understand a variety of social contagions, and here, Islamist militancy is no different.**

With these concerns in mind, we have been drawn to an even more unconventional approach to countering Islamist militancy. This approach views the challenge as one would a global public health threat or epidemic. As such, it draws on the scientific principles and practices of epidemiology as well as the insights from a growing body of research on social contagion phenomena such as fashions, fads, rumors, civil violence, and revolutionary ideas.[4]

Indeed, social scientists increasingly have looked to epidemiology to understand a variety of social contagions, and here, Islamist militancy is no different. For it is the spread of Islamist mili-

tant ideology, of this body of ideas, that animates the broader phenomenon. Taken in this context, ideology plays a critical role in understanding the spread of Islamist militancy, particularly within the context of the "war of ideas." However, ideas do not propagate in a vacuum, but rather their infectious appeal often results from an amalgam of factors.

It is no surprise, therefore, that many have in fact employed disease metaphors to describe the challenge of Islamist militancy. Thus, references to terrorism being a "virus" or al Qaeda "mutating" or "metastasizing" are common. Similarly, the image of madrassas and mosques being "incubators" of a "virulent ideology" is frequently invoked. Such metaphors have a visceral appeal in that they help to convey a dangerous and, moreover, darkly insidious threat. For some, it sets — implicitly at least — a more realistic goal for what can be practically achieved to eliminate this scourge. Just as very few diseases have been completely eradicated, so the likelihood that terrorism or political violence will be rendered extinct is remote. The best outcome is for it to become a manageable, low probability, albeit sometimes deadly, nuisance much like many other social ills.

> **References to terrorism being a "virus" or al Qaeda "mutating" or "metastasizing" are common. Similarly, the image of madrassas and mosques being "incubators" of a "virulent ideology" is frequently invoked.**

Beyond its metaphorical appeal, there are more practical attractions to an epidemiological/public health approach. Three stand out:

- First, epidemiologists observe rigorous standards of inquiry and analysis to understand the derivation, dynamics, and propagation of a specific disease. In particular they seek clarity on the origins, geographical, and social contours of an outbreak: where is the disease concentrated, how is it transmitted, who is most at risk or "susceptible" to infection, as well as, why some portions of society may be less susceptible or for all intents and purposes, immune. Applying the same methodological approach to mapping and understanding Islamist militancy can yield immediately useful guidance on where and how to counter it.

- Second, epidemiologists recognize that diseases neither arise nor spread in a vacuum. They emerge and evolve as a result of a complex dynamic interactive process between people, pathogens, and the environment in which they live. Indeed, the epidemiologic concept of "cause" is rarely if ever singular or linear, but more akin to a "web" of direct and indirect factors that play a lesser or greater role in differing circumstances. To make sense of this complexity, epidemiologists typically employ a standard analytical device that "deconstructs" the key constituent elements of a disease. This model helps not only to understand the phenomenon in its entirety but also to anticipate how it might evolve in the future. As will be discussed below, the same systemic conception of disease can be adapted to understand the constituent elements of Islamist militancy and their evolution.

- Third, just as epidemiologists view disease as a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon so public health officials have come to recognize that success in controlling and rolling back an epidemic typically results from a carefully orchestrated, systematic, prioritized, multi-pronged effort to address each of its constituent elements. At the same time, however, it is also recog-

nized that significant progress or major advances can sometimes be precipitated by relatively minor interventions — or "tipping points." Again, there are lessons and insights to be learned here for orchestrating a global counter-terrorism campaign.

Before turning to what a global campaign to defeat Islamist militancy might look like were it to follow a public health or counter-epidemic approach, it is necessary to understand how epidemiologists typically try to understand disease and how this can help us understand the challenge we face.

THE EPIDEMIC MODEL

As indicated above, epidemiologists employ a standard approach or model to study epidemics that deconstructs an outbreak into four key components recognizing that in reality they are all dynamically inter-connected (see Figure II).[5]
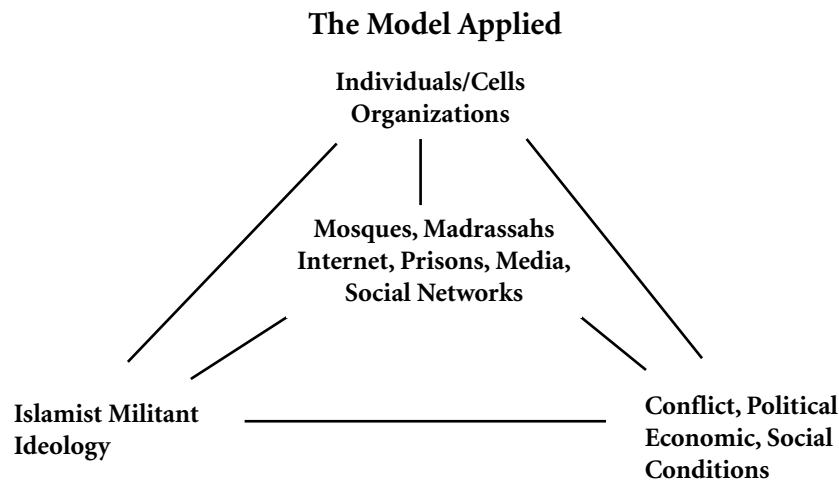
FIGURE II

The Classic Epidemic Model
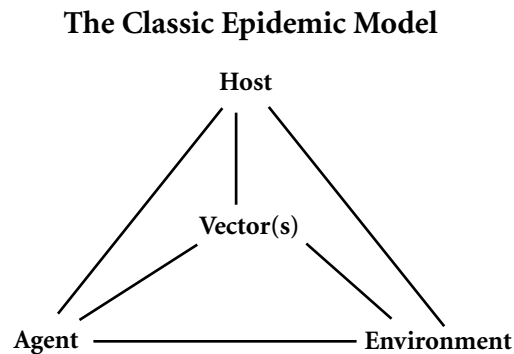
In simple terms, the agent refers to the pathogen (e.g., a virus or bacterium) that causes disease. The host refers to a person infected by the disease ("infective") while the environment refers to a variety of external factors that affect both agent and host. At the center of the triad are the "vectors," the key pathways or conduits that help propagate the disease.

Islamist militancy is clearly not a disease in a comparably clinical fashion. Whereas those who fall victim to disease are typically passive and unwitting receptors of the pathogen, Islamist militants, to a lesser or greater extent, willingly decide to play an active role of some kind. Yet, if we accept that their actions are in large part driven by information and ideas that they have been "exposed" to in one way or another and which they have found to be attractive and compelling — "infectious" in other words — so that they in turn seek others to share their views and join with them in their actions, then the phenomenon of Islamist militancy can be seen to have epidemic-like qualities. It too, therefore, can be deconstructed using the classic epidemic model as follows (see Figure III).

Thus, so applied, the agent is Islamist militant ideology. Specifically, two primary "strains" can been identified: (1) a transnational, Salafist/jihadist ideology as espoused by al Qaeda;[6] and (2) a nationalist/insurgent Islamist militant ideology as espoused by groups such as Hizballah, Hamas, and some of the Kashmiri militant groups. Each of these ideological strains is characterized by a specific set of underlying motivations, goals, and scope. The host is the person or group infected

FIGURE III

The Model Applied

Individuals/Cells
Organizations

Mosques, Madrassahs
Internet, Prisons, Media,
Social Networks

Islamist Militant
Ideology

Conflict, Political
Economic, Social
Conditions

by the virus, i.e., an Islamist militant organization, cell, or individual. The environment refers to key factors specific to the Muslim world that promote exposure to Islamist militancy — conflict, political repression, economic stagnation, and social alienation being the leading influences. Vectors in this case refer to a variety of known conduits that are used to propagate the ideology and associated action agendas such as mosques, prisons, madrassas, the Internet, satellite television, and diasporic networks.

Several policy relevant benefits accrue from conceiving of Islamist militancy in this fashion. First, it captures the key elements of the challenge in a systemic fashion rather than in a disaggregated, unconnected way that so often bedevils analysis and understanding. Second, it is a dynamic model that acknowledges that the phenomenon is not static but constantly evolving with the emergence of new strains, new "hosts", new "vectors", and changing environmental conditions. Third, it provides insights into how Islamist militancy may evolve in the future.

Unlike a disease outbreak, however, where those infected typically (though not always) are motivated to report their condition to seek treatment, it is clearly more difficult to assess the size and spread of Islamist militancy. A combination of indicators (for example, the number of attacks conducted, attacks thwarted, militants killed or incarcerated, jihadist web sites, dissemination of training materials, etc.) suggests that the phenomenon is expanding as well as mutating in the ways indicated earlier. Attitudinal surveys within the Muslim world toward the United States and the West more generally would also suggest that the pool of "susceptibles" — those at risk of becoming Islamist militants — is large and expanding in certain countries. The overall picture can be depicted in the following way (see Figure IV, next page).

THE COUNTER-EPIDEMIC APPROACH

Faced with the outbreak of an infectious disease, public health officials typically employ a three-pronged strategy to counter the threat:

First, *contain* the most threatening outbreaks to prevent them from gaining enough mass and momentum to overwhelm public health responders and threaten public order. Standard measures include quarantining specific areas to contain the movement of infectious individuals, eliminating or decontaminating identifiable vectors of transmission, and, if an antidote exists, treating and rehabilitating individuals that have succumbed to the disease. By containing and contracting the number of "infectives," the pathogen can be effectively eradicated, though such successes are rare as indicated earlier.

Second, *protect* those that are most vulnerable or susceptible to the disease (the High Risk groups) as well as those that are most critical to a functioning society (High Value groups). The most effective countermeasure is selective or targeted immunization programs. Interestingly, not everyone need be inoculated to achieve what is known as "herd immunity" — essentially the level at which the probability of an infected person being in contact with a non-immunized person is

FIGURE IV

Growth of the "Epidemic"
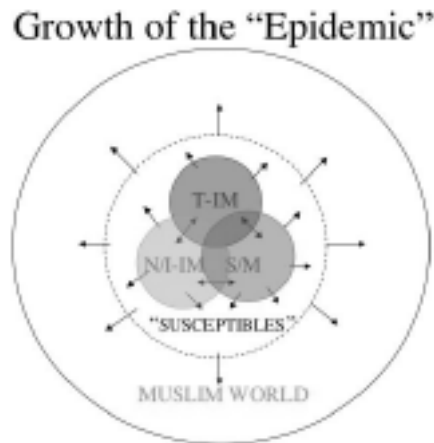
very low if not zero. If an effective vaccine is not available, then other protective strategies are employed including encouraging "safe practices" through public education to reduce the probability of exposure and the rate of new infection.

Third, *remedy* the environmental conditions that fostered the emergence of the disease in specific areas and its subsequent spread. Many types of interventions are conceivable from the local to the global depending on the nature of the threat.

Adapting the same basic strategic imperatives of a counter-epidemic campaign to the threat posed by Islamist militancy would immediately translate into the following operational priorities:

- Containing and contracting the activities of the most "virulent" Islamist militant organizations — the transnational jihadist groups with global reach and apocalyptic agendas — as well as those who could gain a meaningful operational presence in areas of significant strategic interest. This would include most notably Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia,

Egypt, Palestine, the Caucasus and the Muslim diaspora communities of Western Europe as well as areas in the vicinity of key global financial/economic infrastructure assets.

- Protecting the "high risk/high value" communities of the Muslim world. Judging from open source accounts, a disproportionate number of the officers and foot soldiers in the transnational jihadist cause come from a few countries — Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Yemen, Pakistan, as well as the European diaspora communities. The high value communities consist of the educational, religious, political, and security sectors of countries where Islamist militant organizations could make the largest inroads as well as the growing number of transnational cultural, business and media networks that affect the lives of many millions of Muslims throughout the larger *ummah.*

- Remedying the key environmental factors that foster Islamist militancy. The most important would appear to be the ongoing conflicts or insurgencies involving Muslims and non-Muslims that help validate the central jihadist argument that Islam is under attack and which also serve as recruiting magnets and training grounds for them — notably, Iraq, Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and several smaller conflicts in central and southeast Asia. Social alienation within the European diaspora communities along with public corruption, political repression, and economic stagnation in key areas of the Muslim world are widely viewed as additional factors.

These strategic imperatives can be further translated into specific programs or initiatives, again drawing on the principles and practices of a counter-epidemic campaign:

Containment Measures

In addition to limiting the operational reach and capabilities of the most threatening Islamist militant organizations using standard counter-terrorism measures and discrete special intelligence/military operations, containment initiatives would extend to placing greater emphasis on disrupting and restricting the untrammeled use of key vectors — the Internet, satellite TV, prisons, schools, mosques, etc. — by Islamist militant organizations. Some vectors can be physically shut down, others "decontaminated" of unwanted infectious agents.[7] This appears now to be a largely haphazard, after-the-fact effort rather than a systematically planned, internationally executed campaign.

> **Given the practical limits to such efforts in an open society, greater attention should also be given to nurturing and propagating what can be termed an "ideological antidote" to the key tenets of Islamist militant ideology.**

Given the practical limits to such efforts in an open society, greater attention should also be given to nurturing and propagating what can be termed an "ideological antidote" to the key tenets of Islamist militant ideology. This can include a broadly gauged campaign to denounce and de-legitimize jihadist propaganda and practices such as beheadings, or the killing of innocent civilians, including fellow Muslims as well as more discrete efforts aimed toward a specific group or community. The former includes mobilizing moderate religious figures to issue fatwas condemning the ideology and tactics used as a perversion of Islam, as well as encouraging key leading opinion makers, cultural leaders and mass media figures to do the same.[8] Such efforts have been made but not in an extensive or concerted

way.[9] More targeted activities include exploiting the ideological contradictions or schisms within the transnational jihadist movement to foment internal dissension and possible defection. There are reports, for example, of successful counter-ideological efforts in Yemen that have in turn yielded operational success in rolling up a local al Qaeda network.[10]

Although many Islamist militants are beyond such intellectual suasion — essentially the health care equivalent of treatment and rehabilitation — this may not be the case with some groups and organizations. Local national-insurgent movements, in particular, may be susceptible to a "rehabilitative" process in much the way that other terrorist organizations have abandoned armed struggle. The evolving role of groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, for example, suggests the possibility of their integration into their respective political systems. The provision of amnesties to insurgents willing to lay down arms, as in Afghanistan, constitutes another element of rehabilitation. And in Iraq, reports suggest a growing rift between the nationalist Iraqi elements of the insurgency and foreign jihadists, in part as a result of the latter's indiscriminate targeting of civilians.[11]

Protective Measures

Whereas the containment measures are directed primarily at those already "infected," protective measures are aimed at those most at risk as well as those who play important societal functions. With better understanding of why certain groups and individuals become first sympathetic to, then supportive of, and, finally, actively engaged in, Islamist militant causes, it is conceivable that targeted programs to effectively "immunize" at risk groups could be designed. There are numerous cases in other areas where key populations have been targeted in ways designed to turn off their receptiveness to specific ideas, messages, and unhealthy or anti-social practices. This is accomplished in ways that include appeals to common sense, personal safety, peer group acceptance, religious edicts and societal norms, among others. In some cases, the tactics used are not unlike real vaccination programs that work on the principle of exposing uninfected populations with a weakened or attenuated version of the virus so that the body learns to identify and reject the real thing. Political campaigns, for example, often expose key undecided voters to the arguments of opposing candidates in some cases for ridicule but more often to "arm" them with convincing reasons to be skeptical when they hear the same arguments from those candidates.[12]

Similar public programs aimed at undermining the appeal of militant Islamist ideology could be designed and implemented in many different arenas from schools to mosques to mass media outlets. With the exception of the Muslim communities of western Europe, however, these are clearly not initiatives that the United States, and the West more generally, should lead or be openly associated with. The United States can, however, prod allies and partners in the Muslim world and provide discreet assistance.

Such "ideological immunization" efforts aimed at high risk communities should not just be about providing a negative image of militant Islamism, however. Ideally it should also offer a positive and compelling alternative vision for the future. Indeed, the two efforts can be mutually reinforcing. Again, the same arenas and conduits — schools, mosques, mass media outlets — have a critical role to play and thus efforts designed to mobilize and strengthen moderate voices in these sectors should be an indispensable component of the overall effort.[13]

Remedial Measures

Many of the previous initiatives will be harder to accomplish or likely fail if parallel efforts are not also taken to remedy some of the key environmental conditions that promote Islamist mili-

tancy in the Muslim world. For reasons discussed earlier, an intensified effort should be made to resolve or at least tamp down the violent conflicts that have a particularly strong resonance within the Muslim world. Besides reducing their direct role in jihadist recruitment and training, conflict resolution efforts will help invalidate their propaganda and buttress moderate support.

The implementation of political reforms focused on good governance, particularly greater transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, will also play a key role in neutralizing Islamist militant ideology that calls for the overthrow of corrupt regimes. Likewise, greater civil liberties, including broader freedoms of association and expression, as well as the freedom to form political parties and other associations, will help to level the political playing field and allow "healthy" outlets for dissent. Particular emphasis should be placed on institution building so as to preserve democratic gains from being undermined by autocratic regimes or exploited by non-democratic opposition forces. Facilitating the political participation of peaceful, moderate Islamists can also help to develop an effective counterweight to Islamist militants and their violent tactics.

The implementation of economic reforms designed to spur growth and bolster job creation will likewise help to ease popular disaffection, particularly among the region's disproportionately young population. In addition, economic reforms that create an environment that is more appealing to foreign investors will help the Muslim world to integrate more effectively into the broader global economic system and help bridge the gap in relative performance.

The combined effect of these containment, protective, and remedial measures will be to reverse over time the negative trends discussed earlier. As Figure V, below, depicts, the effect will be to divide, isolate, and weaken the Islamist militant organizations and marginalize their operational impact. The pool of "susceptibles" would also shrink in relation to the rest of the Muslim world, which through the various remedial efforts would become a more "healthy" and integrated part of the larger globalizing world.

FIGURE V

Countering the "Epidemic"
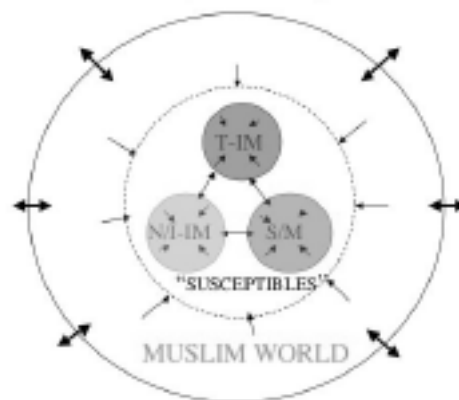
As with any global health campaign, success in countering the challenge of Islamist militancy will depend on a sustained commitment over many years, if not decades, by a broad coalition of like-minded states acting in partnership with a multitude of non-governmental actors. There is no quick or easy cure.

ENDNOTES

1   This paper draws on a larger body of USIP sponsored research on "Rethinking the War on Terror: A Counter-Epidemic Strategy." The views expressed herein are the authors' own.

2   See The 9/11 Commission Report (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), p. 362, ftn. 3.

3   We recognize, therefore, that there are also peaceful Islamist organizations.

4   See, for example, Malcolm Gladwell, The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference (USA: First Back Bay, 2002); Joshua M. Epstein, "Modeling civil violence: An agent-based computational approach" Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, vol. 99, suppl.3, (May 14, 2003), pp. 7243-7250; Luis M.A. Bettancourt, Ariel Cintron-Arias, David I. Kaiser, and Carlos Castillo-Chavez, "The Power of a Good Idea: Quantitative Modeling of the Spread of Ideas from Epidemiological Models," Santa Fe Institute Working Paper, February 6, 2005.

5   Two key references were consulted for this section. B. Burt Gerstman, Epidemiology Kept Simple: An Introduction to Traditional and Modern Epidemiology (New Jersey: Wiley Liss, 2003) and Leon Gordis, Epidemiology 3rd Edition (Philadelphia: Elsevier Saunders, 2004).

6   Numerous sources provide background on the Salafist/Jihadist ideology. These include: Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The New Global Threat: Transnational Salafis and Jihad," Middle East Policy, Vol VIII, No. 4, December 2001, pp.18-38; Christopher M. Blanchard, "Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology," *CRS Report for Congress,* February 4, 2005; *Anonymous, Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America,* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's Inc., 2002); Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004).

7   For example, in February 2005, London's Finsbury Park mosque, once a bastion of radicalism, was reclaimed. A new board of directors ousted the mosque's radical cleric, Abu Abdullah, and literally changed the locks. See Lizette Alvarez, "Britain's Mainstream Muslims Find Voice," *The New York Times,* March 6, 2005. Similarly, measures must be taken within prison systems to curtail and ultimately cease recruitment. See Cutherbertson, p. 20 for specific recommendations.

8   Alvarez, ibid. Mainstream Muslims in Britain have also taken steps to isolate Islamist militants and strengthen ties between moderates and the British establishment.

9   See David E. Kaplan, "Hearts, Minds, and Dollars,"*US News and World Report,* April 25, 2005.

10 See James Brandon, "Koranic Duel Eases Terror," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 4, 2005.

11 Sabrina Tavernise, "Marines See Signs Iraq Rebels are Battling Foreign Fighters," *The New York Times,* June 21, 2005.

12 See Matt Bai, "The Framing Wars," *New York Times Magazine,* July 12, 2005. See also Bettancour, Arias, et. al., p. 10.

13 In Jordan, for example a broad curriculum review is taking place that emphasizes more moderate and progressive interpretations of Islam. See Hassan M. Fattah, "Jordan is Preparing to Tone Down the Islamic Bombast in Textbooks," New York Times, June 12, 2005. A number of European governments are also exploring options for having greater influence over the training of imams who preach in European mosques. See Elaine Sciolino, "Europe Struggling to Train New Breed of Muslim Clerics," October 18, 2004.

Concluding Observations

ASPEN STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP
"MAPPING THE JIHADIST THREAT: THE WAR ON TERROR SINCE 9/11"

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

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❧

Midway through our August 2005 Aspen Strategy Group session on the status of the ongoing war on terror, during a general discussion over whether the United States had a full appreciation for the magnitude and contours of the global campaign confronting the nation, one participant offered that at a comparably early stage of the nearly half-century struggle with the Soviet Union and its regional proxies, the United States would have appeared equally disoriented and struggling for a strategy. The implication was that the United States is indeed early in its quest for a durable approach to dealing with stateless jihadists but ultimately moving in the right direction. It was meant to be a comforting comparison given the ultimate (and utter and total) victory of the West against the Soviets after a campaign marked by vigilance, innovation, and perseverance.

The comparison between the campaign against the Soviet Union and our current attempt to win out against the global jihadist movement is an interesting proposition but one that is ultimately difficult to test. However, there are a few areas of overlap that are telling. Four years into the struggle with the Soviet Union, the United States was in the midst of an ultimately indecisive conflict on the Korean peninsula and at the start of a massive military rearmament after the short-lived demobilization following the end of World War II. Very little was known of the global goals and objectives or the ultimate national capabilities of the Soviet Union; Moscow was the quintessential "black box." The primary regional focus of great power competition (the term "superpower" had not yet come into vogue) was Europe with the Soviet Union seeking to consolidate its territorial gains across Eastern Europe and the United States seeking to bolster war weakened nations in Western Europe. At the outset, there was a powerful ideological dimension to the competition (although this aspect is easy to forget), with many war ravaged nations or colonial outposts looking to communism as a vehicle for political organization and for generating equitable economic growth.

The United States sought to augment its military capacity with a breathtaking set of international and economic initiatives designed to gird free market capitalism and participatory democracy, including the introduction of the Marshall Plan, the establishment of the World Bank, and the launching of the International Monetary Fund. NATO was also inaugurated and was on the way to

becoming the most important military and political alliance in modern history. Perhaps crucially, there were a few strategic documents — George Kennan's X manifesto among them — that provided an insightful and overarching vision and broad game plan for the ongoing campaign. Politically, there were clear partisan divisions but also a relatively strong centrist consensus on basic foreign policy and national security matters. On the home front, there was also something approaching a national hysteria about the supposed inroads of communists and front groups infiltrating into a variety of American domestic institutions.

The challenge of comparing this history and the subsequent effort against the Soviet Union and the ongoing struggle with jihadist warriors is obvious. The former was a powerful nation state, geographically located with (at least in theory) a quantifiable military industrial output and a conventionally organized armed forces. The al Qaeda fighters and conspirators belong to a stateless and nebulous movement with a shared, religiously inspired ideology. The Soviet Red Army fielded an enormous arsenal of sophisticated weaponry and elevated martial skills to a veritable science. Al Qaeda operatives deploy from Pakistani caves, Balinese jungles, London suburbs, and American airports with widely varying degrees of operational training, the only common denominator among the jihadists seemingly being access to the militant sites on the web. A kind of coexistence was possible with the Soviet Union; no apparent, comparable coexistence is possible with the jihadists. Mutual deterrence was the strategic framework that largely kept the peace between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., while preemptive action has served as the only viable means of defense against the violent Islamists. Nevertheless, despite these differences, there are at least some useful grounds for comparison.

> **A kind of coexistence was possible with the Soviet Union; no apparent, comparable coexistence is possible with the jihadists.**

Since the attacks of 9/11, the United States has maintained a near constant state of military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and has facilitated a global system of intelligence interactions virtually unprecedented in the history of clandestine cooperation. This state of armed and uncertain vigilance is similar in many ways to the early era of the Cold War when the United States confronted an uncertain enemy on the Korean peninsula and elsewhere. While there have been no further attacks inside the United States, there have been numerous deadly attacks elsewhere, from the Bali nightclub bombings, the Spain train attacks, to the London underground suicide bombings. This global sense of not knowing where the next attack will come is also similar to the uncertainty associated with the visual of falling dominos that permeated Cold War era analogizing underscoring worries about communist inroads in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa. There have been at best uneven advances in the area of homeland defense since 9/11, and as a result, deep worries about the level of domestic preparedness in the event of another catastrophic attack. During the Cold War, school children and local authorities dutifully practiced "duck and cover" exercises and safety protocols, but little good these would have been in the immediate wake of a major nuclear exchange.

Cooperation with friends and allies since 9/11 has been uneven, with conspicuously close coordination with a handful of allies such as Britain and Australia but a noticeable alienation with many others on the international scene. The United States certainly enjoyed more allied solidarity at least during the formative periods of the Cold War. While the jihadist creed is ultimately attractive to

remarkably few in the Islamic world, it is also true that U.S. "soft power" has suffered considerably in a global setting since the onset of the war on terrorism. Thus, there is no true "hearts and minds" competition between the United States and the Islamists of a kind reminiscent of the early Cold War, but rather an intense struggle between radically conservative and modernist elements being waged within the Islamic world. It is fundamentally unclear whether U.S. efforts on the battlefield, in the intelligence arena, in the handling of enemy combatants, or in court of global public opinion are actually helping the reformers or the violent traditionalists.

Unlike the Soviet Union, whose objectives were generally more conservative and ultimately about preserving the status quo (or slightly adjusting it in Moscow's favor), jihadist goals are exceptionally broad and essentially global in scope. They seek to drive the infidels out of Islamic territories, topple apostate regimes, foster a global religious revival, re-establish the caliphate, and expand the followers of a particularly conservative — even archaic — brand of Islam. Coexistence is not a feature in their core belief structure. Their ultimate strategy for undertaking such an audacious agenda is neither linear nor sequential but is in a sense more opportunistic in its ambitions. The jihadist goal is to build a global following, not to seize territory — unlike Stalin's conquest of Eastern Europe -- and their time horizon is the distant future.

It is at the level of an enduring national commitment, however, that the comparison comes up far short. Throughout the Cold War, the United States found the national resources to support the necessary military spending, the institutional innovation, the scientific research and development, and the national resolve to confront a multi-generational challenge. There are profound questions as to whether the American public — and indeed American leaders — have realistic understanding of what might be necessary in a long, twilight struggle against jihadist combatants. This has been a global struggle, thus far, where a chosen few have born an enormous burden in taxing, combat-intensive environments (in Iraq specifically), but little else has been asked from most Americans. This stands in stark contrast with other periods of intense global competition such as during much of the Cold War, when there was a much broader conception of shared service and sacrifice.

The political dimension inside the United States associated with the war on terror is another salient area of difference with the early Cold War era. Whereas the Cold War saw the establishment of a powerful concept of bipartisan consensus epitomized by Senator Vandenberg's famous "at the water's edge" maxim, the initial period of struggle against the jihadists has often been exploited for narrow political advantages. As a consequence, the domestic political environment has rarely been as poisonously polarized with little in the way of necessary political coalitions designed to advance wise policies.

In the final analysis, the very comparison with the Cold War was probably at least partly animated by a collective desire to identify some familiar lodestars to guide our path through a most unfamiliar terrain. As such, the Cold War analogy is interesting, even heartening in some instances, but ultimately not terribly relevant to the extraordinarily different task at hand.

POINTS FOR CLOSER REFLECTION

Understanding the Jihadists

Our meetings in Aspen helped advance a very broad discussion around a host of issues integral to our struggle with the jihadists. However, in many if not most respects we left with more questions than answers and a general sense that there was much about the jihadist struggle that we were only

at the earliest stages of understanding. For instance, as if to signify the very fundamental challenges associated with understanding something akin to a global insurgency, the group debated for days what the appropriate term of art should be for those we were fighting against. Global jihadists? Violent religious fanatics? Islamist radicals? Or simply terrorists? At the heart of this conundrum was primarily the question of the role of religion in the overall struggle. Indeed, it is perhaps not surprising given the early stage of the global challenge and the intense political stakes involved that our group had a difficult time agreeing on some very basic, first-order questions: Is this a religious struggle or a political war masquerading behind religious symbolisms? Ultimately, we left Aspen with no fundamental consensus around these essential questions. One significant concept the group did agree on, however, was the desire for and importance of modern technologies — everything from the Internet to the weapons mass of destruction — to these extremist jihadist groups.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

In 2004 the Aspen Strategy Group devoted its entire summer session to the topic of how the United States was fairing in its efforts to construct an integrated policy for dealing with nuclear proliferation concerns, ranging from rounding up non-secured fissionable material to shutting down international supplier networks for shadowy nuclear related technologies. This year we focused more on how the jihadists view such weapons and technologies. It is increasingly clear that some radicalized elements within the jihadist community not only seek to reconcile and reinforce the justifications for the use of weapons of mass destruction with their interpretations of Islamic philosophy, but also wish to take active measures to acquire such capabilities, allowing them to inflict enormous casualties. Our deliberations were animated by sharp disagreements both over how much has been done with respect to government policy to prevent such WMD attacks and over how likely the use of a weapon of mass destruction on U.S. or European territory might actually be in the future. There was considerable uncertainty about exactly how much progress al Qaeda and its associated groups have made in acquiring the necessary technologies, capabilities, and expertise to both instigate a successful program and stage a subsequent attack. Yet there was a general acknowledgement that the risks of a serious lapse in non-proliferation protocol is a very real threat that continues to require high level attention and resources. There have indeed been several important international initiatives designed to address these issues, including the G-8 plan for fissile cleanup on the territories of the former Soviet Union, but there continues to be shortfalls in funding and bureaucratic roadblocks that have inhibited overall progress. ASG will undoubtedly return to this issue again in the near future to explore both risks and possible new approaches to the proliferation challenge.

Iraq

At virtually every intellectual turn and substantive departure in Aspen, the group was confronted by the specter of Iraq. Iraq arguably has taken on the role of the "center of gravity" in the sense that Clausewitz used the term. It is arguably the locus and centerpiece of the current jihadist strategy against the United States. Having launched an audacious war without historical precedent, the United States is in the midst of grappling with outcomes scarcely foreseen or anticipated in the buildup to the invasion. Currently, no aspect of the global war can be disentangled from the ongoing conflict in Iraq. It is quite possible that the ASG session in the summer of 2005 coincided with an historic juncture in the U.S. prosecution of the war effort in Iraq, and as Americans read about this pivotal moment online, so do their enemies use the internet — but instead as a terrorist training ground for their followers.

The Sunni-Shia Divide

One of our most provocative papers and discussions centered around the question of the prospects for a serious Sunni-Shia schism emanating from, and spurred by, the ongoing conflict in Iraq. While American mindsets tend to conceptualize the dominant process underway in Iraq as the painful maturation of a highly fractured and still nascent democracy inside the country, there was a powerful perspective — examined at Aspen — that suggests the unintended consequence of the U.S. invasion was in opening a veritable Pandora's Box of ethnic tensions and rivalry between the two dominant groups inside Iraq and in the surrounding region. This Sunni-Shia divide, it was argued, threatens not just to destabilize Iraq and possibly lead to a civil war in which U.S. policy options are severely constrained but also to potentially spill over Iraqi borders into the surrounding region. Such a development would have a deeply negative impact on American strategic interests and would threaten larger U.S. policy goals in the broader region. Recent events inside Iraq indicate an undeniable up-tick in sectarian tensions, but there is clearly a need for greater understanding among most policy makers contemplating the rapidly moving set of developments playing out in Iraq in real time.

The Internet

At our sessions in Aspen, the group received a troubling, indeed harrowing briefing on the role of the worldwide net in spreading the violent gospel of the jihadist ideology. In addition to simply recruiting converts and mobilizing support amongst the Islamists, the net has proved to also be a deadly conveyer of operational details and intelligence, witnessed daily on the urban battlefields of Iraq. The images of carefully choreographed attacks on U.S. forces were quite chilling and in many senses, the effective use of the net by the jihadists on a worldwide scale came as something of a revelation to many of the participants. While the Markle Foundation and the 9/11 Commission have highlighted aspects of this dangerous new phenomenon, it is clear that much more work needs to be done, not only in understanding how Islamic operators use the highways and byways of the global information architecture to promote their anti-globalist agenda. Further, effective and legal means for combating violent Islamists on the web requires further study and attention. Perhaps more than any single weapon of war, the worldwide web has ironically turned into the most effective communications and operational tool currently employed by the jihadists. Understanding and effectively combating this nefarious use of the web will be critical in confronting the jihadists in cyberspace.

CONCLUSION

The August 2005 session commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Aspen Strategy Group. For 25 summers, dedicated and distinguished Americans have met in Aspen to consider the big foreign policy and national security challenges confronting the country. Over much of this period, coinciding with key periods in the Cold War, the group dealt with aspects of the global confrontation with the Soviet Union. Since 9/11, the Aspen Strategy Group has dealt every summer with an aspect of the global campaign against terrorism, and the summer 2005 session was an attempt at establishing an early scorecard for how the United States is doing in this difficult new international terrain. Like the early architects of American global strategy at the onset of the Cold War, there is a comparable anxiety at this current early stage in the struggle with the global jihad. These uncertainties, fundamental disagreements, and strategic differences were on full display in Aspen

last summer. It is certainly true that we left collectively with more questions than answers, and one thing can be reasonably ascertained from our proceedings: Like the many sessions of the Aspen Strategy Group that were convened during the Cold War about our struggle against the Soviet Union, this will not be our last session on the global campaign against terrorism. Indeed, in all likelihood, it is merely one of the first.